

PUNCH

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WHILE most people are glad to learn that undergraduates are mobilizing opinion against the H-bomb, a select minority would feel easier if youth turned its attention to some curtailment of ripe tomatoes, flour bags and other conventional weapons.

MR. GAITSKELL confesses to alarm about the activities of Mr. Swinger's Victory for Socialism Group, fearing, no doubt, that it may develop into a Victory for Socialism Group group.

THE ALMOST indecent haste of Dr. Fuchs' knighthood was a blow to the newspaper sub-editors; they had planned to dub him, inevitably, as "Mr. Antarctic" in the headlines, and obviously "Sir South Pole" wasn't half as good.

THOSE who fear that we may hear less of Mrs. Gerald Legge now that she has become Viscountess Lewisham must console themselves with the thought that at any rate they won't hear any more of Viscount Lewisham than they did when he was Mr. Gerald Legge.

M.P.s demanding the removal of suicide from the category of criminal

LOVERS' LEAP

[Penalty £5]

offences argue that the law against it is no deterrent. A really determined man will go ahead if it kills him.

What's My Thin Red Line?

THE WAR OFFICE plans a new uniform that'll dress Soldiers more smartly than blues or than battledress; But for thankless recruits who show signs of not caring, it Remains their first privilege to walk out without wearing it.

THE CONTRAST between the Prime Minister's jolly bonhomie abroad and his staid coolness at home has drawn comments everywhere, including one from his wife, who explained that "he couldn't possibly slap a London policeman on the back." Perhaps he could begin in a small way, bending to pat the occasional police dog.

"MAYFAIR OYSTER KING SUED FOR DIVORCE"

Daily Express

No comment from him, of course.

WITH the prospect of new pacts and treaties ahead, Mr. Sanford Cluett, of



America, couldn't have hit on a better time to invent a new sort of paper "which stretches without tearing."

CRICKET-LOVERS who read about a road-contractor's lorry tipping over into a swimming-pool in Florida enjoyed the idea of the pool's being closed because of the pitchlogged state of the water.

DESPITE all the fuss, the B.B.C.'s television programme showing a heart being probed went off without any complaints. However, this was only to be expected of a viewing public that hasn't even complained about "This Is Your Life."



Punch Diary

TO judge from the advance publicity, the "Victory for Socialism" march to Aldermaston this Easter will be even sillier than such events usually are. Ambling along at just over one mile an hour, the procession, drawn from the dissident Socialists of two hundred constituencies, will take four days to cover the fifty miles between their "act of dedication" in Trafalgar Square and their final rally outside the Atomic Energy Authority's establishment. The marchers are to be provided with "rudimentary overnight shelter" and tea, but must bring their own food, eating irons and sleeping bags. At intervals they will pause for an address, here by Mr. Frank Allaun and Mr. Fenner Brockway, there by Canon Collins, Dr. Soper, Mr. Michael Foot and Mr. Ian Mikardo. These eminent speakers are not expected actually to march themselves, however, nor to bring their own food.

Canon Collins and Dr. Soper are as near as the marchers will get to the religious observations commonly associated with this season of the year, though I suppose a rudimentary church service could be arranged if asked for.

No one can help admiring such devoted souls as the Quakers who, at great personal risk, make their way into the atomic testing-grounds in America to register their protests. These silly-billies of the Ginger Group aren't going to encounter any danger, except possibly from traffic, and most of the discomfort will be of their own making. Carrying on in such a juvenile manner does not seem to me a very good way to recommend yourself to the electorate as its potential governors at a time like this.

L'Etat, cest . . . ?

LORD HAILSHAM's airport interviews provided an unconscious defence of conventional jargon among politicians—a subject which I have misguidedly attacked in these notes. Hailsham, ignoring the well-trodden highway of top-level cliché which Mr. Macmillan pounded to even finer dust in his Commonwealth tour speeches, prefers the jolly, informal approach to interviews. "The Americans took me to their hearts . . ." "I was on television several times, and people used to ask: 'When is the Lord appearing?'" "They [British Information Service, New York] like to nobble a Cabinet Minister when they can . . ." (Who wouldn't, in the present state of the nation?) "When you've got a large empire to control, as I have . . ." (meaning the Conservative Party) . . . and, concerning by-elections, "I'll speak if I'm wanted. It shows encouragement to local associations if they know they have a Cabinet Minister guaranteed . . ." How much wiser to stick to the familiar old bromides, which everyone expects and no one takes any notice of! The effect of a departure from them is to make Lord Hailsham, generally well thought of as a cheerful, intelligent, energetic chap, appear a self-satisfied stuffed shirt who fancies he's running the country.

Greats and Smalls

PROFESSOR BELOFF's criticism of Oxford's Modern Greats, or Honour School of Philosophy, Politics and Economics, that it does not add up to one all-round mental training, reminded me of the University's first attempt to do something about the modern world. In the false-dawn-before-last, in 1920, Oxford set up this rival to Ancient History and Philosophy in the same week that it gave degrees to women. The new School was accused of being a nail in the coffin of the classics, encouraging insularity and concentrating on Kant to a point at which it seemed that academically Germany had won the war. At first the innovation was called "Modern Greats," asserting that it was just as good a school of statesmanship as Classical Greats, the terrible examination that, in Mr. Verdant Green's day, was thus compared with the first University examination, "Smalls"; but philosophers and economists and politicians, though receding

from one another like nebulae, felt the need of a more fraternal bond and now, they tell me, the term is "Social Studies."

Modern Monuments

THROUGH the summer the Ministry of Works will be tidying up Stonehenge, replacing stones thrown down by time or hooligans and pondering whether to replace stones thrown down by historical characters like the Romans. This is the wrong approach to a National Monument whose complicated history has to be represented by more dots on the plan than are comfortable for the sightseer. Waves of invaders changed the original design, now bringing stones enormous distances to add another circle, now rearranging the patterns already on the ground. Our duty to posterity is not just to preserve monuments like dead things but to carry on the tradition that our ancestors bequeathed to us. Where would Westminster Abbey have been if there had been no new building after the twelfth century? The Ministry of Works ought to be lugging enormous square stones from, say, Jutland and arranging them in a giant circle with a slightly, but only slightly, different centre from any of the other circles. If it can be orientated on to an earth satellite, all the better.

The score or so of acute Cockney sketches that appeared in **PUNCH** between 1951 and 1953 under the title "Snax at Jax" marked the first appearance in these pages of

ALAN HACKNEY

A year later came his first novel "Private's Progress," which was made into one of the most successful comic films since the war. Now he has written a sequel to it entitled

I AM ALL RIGHT, JACK

in which Stanley Windrush, Bertram Tracepurcel, Cox and the rest of them meet once more, this time against a background of heavy industry.

A specially condensed version of this new book will begin in **PUNCH** on March 26.

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"I never felt more like singin' the blues
'Cos I never thought that I'd ever lose
Your love."

EAST IS WEST . . .

The first of a new series of articles discussing the cold war and the menace of nuclear weapons

THIS NUCLEAR MADNESS

By J. B. PRIESTLEY

APPEARING for those who want to go on enjoying their wives or husbands, playing with their children, tasting the air and relishing the fruits of the earth, who have no wish to exist in outer space or deep underground listening to the robots firing the giant rockets, I pose this question: *When do we conduct this nuclear madness to its padded cell?* We have not much time. Once we are living among the rockets and nuclear missiles of all sizes, as soon as roaring brigadiers anywhere can indent for tactical atomic weapons, it will be too late. Either we shall all be mad or very sorry.

In this context I am not using *madness* and *mad* as vague terms of abuse. There is in this nuclear business an increasing strain of lunacy. It has never from the first been soundly rooted in common sense. It has been logical in its moves but never realistic. It is like a man who, believing himself to be an egg, works out a policy—taking care not to let anybody drop him, not to go too near frying pans and bacon, and so forth—all very sensible and necessary moves if he is an egg and not a man out of his wits. All this may come as a shock to many readers, who, without thinking much about it, wish to go on believing that they can trust the sound, responsible men in the know and that people like me, who point in horror at them, are just a bunch of cranks and crackpots. I beg to assure such readers that this is a false and dangerous belief, that it is their sound, responsible men who are in flight from reality and do not know what they are doing.

They are not to be blamed personally. They have existed, mostly overworking, too long in a stifling unhealthy atmosphere of secrecy and hysteria, completely cut off from the salutary influence

of sensible public criticism. They have to plot and plan, invent and organize, in a little nightmare world of their own, in which everything is monstrous, out of all reasonable proportion. They have to pretend that bombs and rockets that are like vast earthquakes and pestilences, capable of ruining a thousand generations of men and the very earth itself, of creating menacing mutations even in bacteria and viruses, are merely a few more weapons to be used by political leaders, who are not really living in this new atomic age, as instruments of policy. They are making use not of scientific knowledge but of its ignorance, for not one of them knows (I have talked to some of them) what might happen. They are hurriedly preparing for a war that must never take place. They are playing a power game in which the only prizes can be cities turned into radioactive cemeteries. This is not politics, not war, not anything ever seen before in public life: it is the death wish coming into action.

Now that the nuclear arms race is being run flat out its neurotic and hysterical atmosphere is obvious. But was nuclear armament ever on a sound basis? Was it ever coolly thought out? Has it not existed ever since the war in a bad atmosphere and on a doubtful basis? From the first the Americans, nice and conscientious people, have felt guilty about those two atomic bombs they dropped on Japan, and ever since have not been able to think straight. For all their loud talk the Russians, who know what a narrow scrape the last war was for them, are

really more fearful than aggressive, being still secretly afraid of Germany; and of course, like a new boy admitted to the game, they cannot help playing power politics hard, rough, and tough.



Old enough to know better, Britain has played a muddled and rather contemptible role, chiefly because her pretence of still being the power she was deceives nobody; and her insistence upon arriving at the conference table with nuclear weapons has behind it a good deal of ordinary stupid vanity. (Unlike her diversion of

nuclear power for peaceful purposes, which is shining good sense.) The three of them are like a paranoiac, an alcoholic and a neurotic playing poker, for stakes they cannot afford, until four in the morning and not knowing how to stop.

I say that in all this I can find no clear realistic thinking. Let us consider the routine argument for this dangerous nuclear stockpiling. Here it goes. Russia is determined to dominate the world. For this purpose the Soviet Government maintains a very large army, air force and fleet of submarines. We can only prevent their breaking out and overrunning us by the deterrent of nuclear arms. We do not want these things and are ready to give them up, but only on certain conditions. We cannot negotiate from weakness but only from strength. Any proposal from the other side must hide a trap. So the race is on, with more and more increasingly menacing and horrible devices piling up, and God knows how and where it will end.

Now no doubt the Russians want everything they can get. But they do not think they will get it through direct military conquest; indeed no Soviet leader in his senses would want to see the Red Army and its marshals a long, long way from Moscow. They believe



that the idea of Communism will do the real work for them. (And though so far they have sometimes been wrong, they have often been right too.) If in any neighbouring state the Communists come into power or are at least able to create something like a political vacuum, then the Red tanks will roll towards the frontier and the commissars will begin to move in. That is the technique; and rows of rockets with nuclear warheads are not much use against it. The best defence against an idea is a better idea. We have a better idea—that men can have prosperity and freedom as well—but we are so extravagantly busy with our bases for H-bombers and ballistic missiles of every sort that we have neither the time nor the money, nor indeed the will, to spread the idea. And the very men who are now almost out of their minds trying to “contain” Communism are precisely those who care least about freedom. They have abandoned the one idea that is of any use to us. They are ready to fight to the death, ours as well as theirs, but are beginning to forget what they will be fighting about. Some of them are desperately screaming defiance at their own shadows.

In this world of possible nuclear war Britain's position has always been weak—for as an atomic target she is a sitting duck—and now it is intolerable. We can find ourselves catastrophically involved in a nuclear war before we know what it is about. As a nation genuinely concerned with defending its own liberties and possessions, preventing its sister from being raped, we should be infinitely better off using conventional weapons, especially if we could organize a vast militia to resist actual invasion. I am not myself a pacifist. If invaders do not want to be killed they should stay at home, where they belong. Similarly, it would not worry me if I learnt that the citizens of Moscow had been provided with atomic pistols capable of disintegrating an enemy at a few yards' range: I do not propose to invade Moscow. Let us all be ready to defend our homes. This would dispose of the old raping-your-sister argument. It is as well to remember that most of

the people who ask us to protect our sisters too often imagine that our sisters are distant oil wells and tin mines.

My point is that people fighting one another more or less face-to-face know what they are fighting about, whereas people preparing to launch nuclear ballistic missiles to travel five thousand miles or so really do not know what they are doing. Overworked, weary foreign secretaries at cross-purposes, a wrong signal, a mere accident, anything might jerk the hair-trigger arrangements into action, setting the human race warring against itself. For a nuclear war is not just another war on a more destructive scale; it is not war at all in the old sense; its appalling consequences would be wildly out of proportion to any possible political conflict. This means we are ready to pursue our idiotic quarrels to the point of jeopardizing the genetic heritage and future environment of our species; and in the shadow of this volcanic peak of folly and wickedness we now pass our days.

“And the state of the art of contra-contramissilery is ahead of the state of the art of contra-missilery.” After which we are told that the U.S. must have an advanced and costly early-warning system on which billions of dollars must be spent.

The Air Force is also considering other multibillion-dollar space projects that are years away but must be started up soon. Among them: a project to position four reconnaissance space satellites thousands of miles up; another that involves construction of

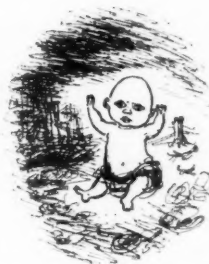
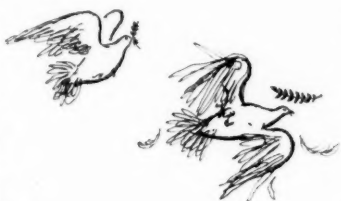
space platforms serviced by manned gliders and provisioned by Atlas freighters. The military value of these projects leads inevitably to antisatellite missiles and to wholly new phases of the deterrent concept as the world moves into space . . .

This is a quotation from an account in *Time* of America's 38 missile programmes. It seems to me so much well-reasoned lunacy. It expresses a collective hysteria that may soon take leave of reality altogether. It is life imitating bad art, those horror films in which mad scientists toil away in basements creating monsters.

Never in human history, not even when the most fantastic blood-thirsty tyrants have ruled empires, have so many ordinary men and women been victimized as they are to-day by this nuclear madness, which not only threatens their existence but wastes on one devilish device after another the time, energy, and money that could give people houses, schools, hospitals, libraries, museums, art galleries, theatres, concert halls. These people have never asked that their money should be spent in this fashion. They have nowhere been consulted. It is farcical to pretend that any democratic choice has ever been made here. If their ministers

had involved our forefathers in such proceedings the politicians involved would have been impeached and executed. But now we are sheep led by lunatic shepherds.

What can we do? The answer is that, while some of us are still in our right minds, we in Britain should compel our Government, by persuasion but then if necessary by action, to announce to the world that we British have now had enough of this nuclear madness, that we propose to have done with it, preferably in company with America and Russia, but beyond a certain date, before the rocket bases have been completed and the tactical atomic weapons have been distributed like oranges at a children's party, to have done with it anyhow, if necessary alone. But I doubt if that will be necessary. Everybody knows the dreadful game has gone on too long. What is needed now is a sane example.



The views expressed in this series do not necessarily represent those of PUNCH. Other contributors will be:

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LORD CHANDOS
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D. ZASLAVSKI (of *Krokodil*)



America Day by Day

P. G. WODEHOUSE reports from New York

TO one who, like myself, is fond of Governments, and particularly that branch of them that handles income tax, it has come as a nasty blow to learn that the Director of Internal Revenue has lost his ten-year battle with Mr. Louis F. Williams of 219 Clinton Street, Brooklyn, over that business of the \$2528.51. U.S. District Judge Robert A. Inch has ruled that the Statute of Limitations precludes the Director from getting back a cent of it.

In case you have not been following the thing, what happened was that in 1948 Mr. Williams claimed a refund of the sum I have mentioned, and it was only after he had trousered and spent it that the authorities found that he was not entitled to it. One can imagine their feelings. Picture Dracula suddenly discovering that he had inadvertently overlooked a pint of blood, and you will have the idea. For the next ten years

they wrote Mr. Williams what my morning journal describes as "a long series of unconvincing letters" with a view to inducing him to part, and now it is too late.

It would be interesting to read this correspondence. I imagine it started with a lot of that "Sir, This is to inform you that unless you immediately—" stuff, and became more and more plaintive over the years till finally it got down to "Listen, old man . . ." and "Ah, come on, Louis, be a sport."

Talking of Louis and income tax, you may recall that Joe Louis was behind-hand with his to the tune of, if I remember correctly, about two million bucks. He has now made an arrangement with the authorities to pay them so much a year till his obligations are fulfilled, and should be all square by 2018 or 2020 at the latest. Nice going, Joe.

Television once more demands our attention. What with ratings, and sponsors who abruptly stop sponsoring and the rest of it, performers in this section of the arts are far from living the life of Riley these days, but it has been left for Dave Garraway of "Today" to apply the last straw. He has told the cast of his show "not to be so fascinating."

"Look at it this way," he urges. "When 'Today' is on—between seven and nine in the morning—the little woman has family chores to do and the man of the house has to get ready for work. If things are too fascinating on our show, the woman doesn't get things done and the man is late for work, and after a while they will get so unhappy with this attention-holder they won't tune in on us at all."

It raises a very difficult problem for these unfortunate artists. I know that if

someone came to me and said "Wodehouse, you are too fascinating. Tone it down a bit, will you," I wouldn't know how to start.

Viewers of television have their troubles, too. According to Dr. Meyer Naide of the Journal of American Medical Association, if you sit watching the screen for any length of time you get serious disorders in the blood circulation system of the legs. Nor is it any use getting up and walking about, for if you do you inevitably go to the refrigerator for a snack and, according to Dr. Carlton Fredericks, associate professor of nutrition at Farleigh-Dickinson College, first thing you know you are eating the wrong things and going down with arthritis, diabetes, digestive disorders, decaying teeth, disturbances of the nervous system, sinus trouble, migraine headaches, and faintness. A heavy price to pay for listening to someone singing "Heavenly coffee, heavenly coffee" or watching Red Indians in Westerns bite the dust.

It is a very moot point, however, whether the supply of red Indians willing to bite the dust will not soon give out.

You probably noticed in the papers the report of that momentary falling out between the Ku Klux Klan and the Lumbee Indians of Lumberton, North Carolina, when fifty klansmen started to throw their weight about and the Lumbees, a branch of the Cherokees, instead of biting the dust blazed away at them with guns and sent them running like rabbits.

Obviously this incident is not going to be without its repercussions. As somebody has pointed out, Indians have never yet won a movie or television battle, but now a victory like this cannot but encourage them to stand up for their rights. Will Indian extras, he says, demand the privilege of okaying scripts? Will they insist on a new set-up whereby they win seven out of every thirteen times? Already, he adds, it is believed that six of the seven top television (Western branch) heroes are ready to smoke the pipe of peace with the Indians. The seventh is unable to smoke the pipe as he is sponsored by a cigarette manufacturer.

A recently published history of Macy's department store contains many

arresting anecdotes of the late Jacob Strauss, one of the partners. The one that touched me most was of the occasion when Mr. Strauss came upon a lad, who described himself as a stock boy, playing with an electric train in the toy department and dismissed him instantly with a week's salary and two weeks' severance pay. It was not until the money had changed hands and the child had departed that Mr. Strauss discovered that his young friend, though unquestionably a stock boy, was a stock boy not at Macy's but at Gimbel's down the street.

"Mrs. Diana Tibbetts delivered a hefty swipe to the left ear . . . and Lady Juliette Cunliffe-Owen nose-dived into a spring mattress. As the dust cleared her ladyship gasped: 'Count me out.' But Lieut-Colonel Godfrey Jeans, who was refereeing the most hectic slippery-pole pillow fight this side of the Equator, roared: 'Not on your life. There's another round to go . . . It was 2 a.m. at the Cresta Ball in the Palace Hotel, where a high time can cost you £100 a day quite easily . . .'"—*Daily Mail*

Obviously worth every penny, though.



Open Letter to Fred Hoyle

DEAR FRED,—For two years your book *The Frontiers of Astronomy* has been my constant bedside companion, and I have now reached chapter eighteen where you discuss something called Olbers' Paradox and the Expanding Universe.

This Expanding Universe business—we astronomers know only too well—is extremely difficult to explain to the layman, but Stephen Leacock's image of Lord Ronald who "flung himself upon his horse and rode madly off in all directions" is probably as near as we can get to a pictorial parallel. The point that baffles you, and used to baffle me, is *why* there should be this cosmic cold-shouldering and fugitation. Why, indeed?

Well, I think I have the answer.

If you will look again through your telescope at the planets, Fred, you will see that the rings of Saturn consist of thousand upon thousand of small objects revolving at high speed. Most of them are spherical, others are cone-shaped, some seem to have a vaguely animal form. I believe that these rings are the result of millions of years of wasted effort on Saturn, that the stuff orbiting out there is nothing less than the residual matter of a million rocket-launching experiments, sputniks, canisters, solid-fuel-containers, oil-drums, dog-like animals and the space-"men" of Saturn. Take a really good look, Fred, on a clear night and you'll see that I'm right.

Now consider Mars. You will recall that a certain French lady, twenty years or so ago, left 100,000 francs to the *Académie des Sciences* as a prize for the

first person to establish communication with another world—*excluding* Mars. How right she was to assume that the presence of life on Mars had already been proved, how wrong she was to accept those funny lines scratched on its surface as evidence of irrigation, navigation and canals! In a moonless sky when Mars is only some thirty-four million miles away those "canals" can be seen for what they really are—the tracks made by dud projectiles, by rockets that failed to take off properly and skimmed over the surface of the planet like a stone on ice.

Jupiter, examined through my binoculars, is a trifle hazy, but it is obvious enough that the dark horizontal bands are not, as is commonly supposed, mere cloud formations. There are two heavy belts of discoloration, at least half a dozen lighter zones of contamination, and all these, without a doubt, are sedimentary deposits of radioactive sludge. When the people of Jupiter dumped their atomic refuse in the seas they no doubt assumed that they had seen the last of it. What happened, Fred, was that the rotation of the planet whisked the sludge into death-dealing concentrations or band-zones. They are still active and lethal, and for this reason I consider it unsafe to look at Jupiter for more than a few seconds except through smoked glass.

As for the moon and its craters I have no patience with people who, ostrich-like, insist that these indentations are the result of volcanic activity or meteoric bombardment. I mean, just how blind can one be to stark reality!

Venus, covered in cloud and mist, is

known to be a desert and uninhabitable. It used to be thought that the dense cloud surrounding the planet was composed of formaldehyde vapour and that the faint markings on the surface represented minor irregularities in an immense peneplain. Well, the formaldehyde theory is now discredited and I see no reason why I should not assume that the pitting denotes an enormous number of "man"-made shelters. All I can say in support of this notion is that tiny air-raid shelters seen through voluminous mist at a colossal distance would not look very different from these shadowy little dots.

I could go on, Fred, about the planets, but my last word must be about the sun itself. During an eclipse old Sol exhibits what astronomers call a corona, and this on examination (smoked glass again, please) is seen to be made up of countless solar prominences. Suddenly the humble earth-bound watcher of the skies sees a tongue of flame shoot out from the surface of the sun, and it is not difficult to imagine that one can hear a strange solar voice intoning "... five, four, three, two, one, zero." The flame rockets tangentially, describes an arc through the inky void and explodes violently and brilliantly on returning to the surface of the star. What do you think is really going on there? Do I have to tell you?

And is it necessary after all this to ask you to think again about the reasons for an expanding universe? All heavenly bodies capable of purposeful independent movement are in headlong retreat. The other planets have already had it, but the stars and galaxies are putting as many light-years as they can between themselves and the dangerous remnants of the solar system. I don't blame them, Fred. Do you?

Sincerely,

BERNARD HOLLOWOOD

§ §

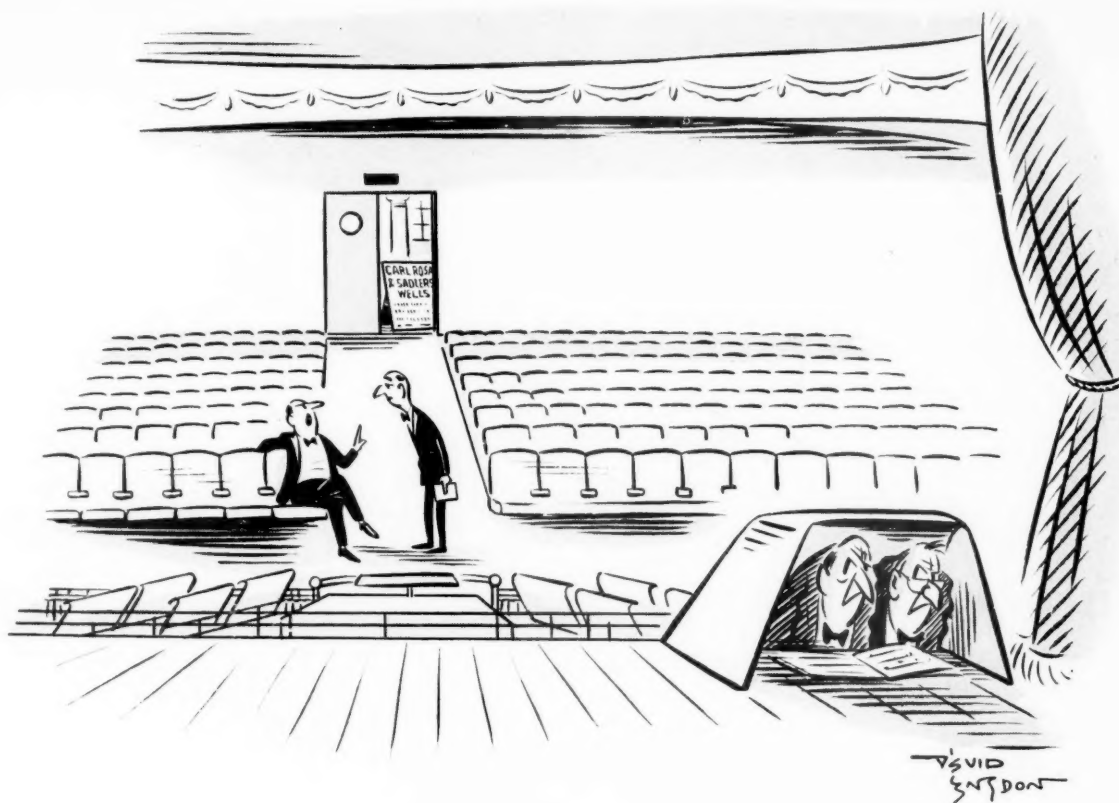
"POULTRY ARE USEFUL

If it is impossible to arrange for other stock to graze the land, poultry can be very useful, their scratching lets sun and air into the sward and the droppings are a valuable artificial fertilizer. A lot of good can also be done by keeping the grass reasonably clear of horse dung."

The Times

We prefer the real thing.





"Quite sure you've coped with all redundancies following our opera companies' merger?"

The Wrong Signal

By D. F. KARAKA

RAILWAY accidents used to occur in India in the days of the British. The British attributed them to acts of sabotage by Indian terrorists. Some Indians alleged that they were a natural result of imperialist maladministration. Others believed they were acts of God.

Since Independence there has had to be a more rational approach to railway accidents, especially as they have continued to occur even after the British left. In the first few years of freedom the Indians accepted the explanation that the British must have left a lot of defective equipment behind—unparallel rails, white-ant-ridden sleepers, confusing railway signals. But after the successful completion of India's First Five-Year Plan and the launching of the Second Plan the Indians felt it necessary to accept responsibility for the running of

their railways. In fact so realistic was the new Indian approach to the problem that when two serious railway accidents occurred in quick succession the Minister of Railways thought it necessary to resign his portfolio.

The resignation did not make any material difference because it was handed in only a few weeks before the general elections at which the Minister was re-elected to Parliament and given a less accident-prone portfolio—Communications.

But something was still wrong with the Indian railways. The accidents continued.

Several committees of investigation, high-powered, political, technical and departmental, were then set up. They were determined to get to the root of the trouble.

The rails were tested. They were now

manufactured in the best steel plants of India with the know-how imported from the U.K.

Other possible causes such as unbalancing of bogies due to ticketless travel were considered but ruled out. After all, a railway train was not exactly restricted to a precise load like a turbo-jet Viscount or a sensitive Connie.

Suspicion then fell on the railway signal which, though only a contraption, played a very vital role in the timing, direction and control of the whole railway system. And with the railway signal one had also to consider the I.Q. of the men who operated it.

It was at this stage that the problem of language came into consideration. Did the average Indian understand such foreign terminology as a "railway signal"? "Stop" with Red and "Go" with Green was easily understood in the

days when English was compulsory in the Indian schools, but a new wave of Sanskritization of essential words had swept over the country. "Railway signal" had been translated into easily understandable Sanskrit: *Agnirathagamanagamanathanidharshakbhaya-suchakthambradhacalohapattika*.

The Indian railwayman had found it easier to learn the one indigenous word *Agnirathagamanagamanathanidharshakbhayasuchakthambradhacalohapattika* than the two foreign words "railway signal."

The *pandits* who coined the word had explained that

Agniratha is a vehicle run on fire;

gamanagaman is the rhythm of the wheels;

pathanidharshak is a pathfinder;

bhayasuchak is an indicator of danger;

thambradhacalohapattika is copper wire.

The whole thing they put together was therefore a logical translation of "railway signal."

But when despite this simplification another serious mishap occurred on the Indian railways the government came quickly to the conclusion that as there seemed to be nothing wrong with the equipment or the administration of the railways perhaps the term "railway signal" had been incorrectly translated.

A reference was, therefore, made to a new set of *pandits*.

After considerable deliberation they ruled that while *Agnirathagamanagamanathanidharshakbhayasuchakthambradhacalohapattika* was the classical translation of "railway signal," a more popular Sanskrit word should be tried.

And so they applied their minds to find a new Sanskrit equivalent which would convey the meaning of "Stop" and "Go" with greater precision. They decided on *Dhoomryagamanagaman-suchaklohathambapattika*.

Dhoomrya meant a vehicle that is moved by smoke or steam.

gamanagaman was as before, a forward or backward movement.

suchak was an indicator, as before.

But *lohathambapattika* was an inversion of *thambalohapattika*. *Loha* was iron; *thambra* was copper. By placing the harder iron in front of the softer metal, which was copper, the *pandits* gave precision to the railway signal and stability to the Indian railways.

In fact the only trouble seems to have been that they had been using the wrong signal all this time.

Nudes in the Greenhouse

By D. B. WYNDHAM LEWIS

From our Horticultural Correspondent
ROSEGROWERS, nurserymen, and members of the flower-loving public who flocked recently to the Galerie de Seine, West Halkin Street, W, to admire Sir Matthew Smith's "Nude with a Rose," the rich colouring of which was justly extolled by *The Times* Art Critic, found little difficulty in recognizing the species in question. It is, of course, the gold medal rose catalogued by Messrs. Jobson of Bungay as "Mrs. Ted Nockett," and the warm, luscious flesh-texture and every nuance of an opulent bloom are finely rendered by a

distinguished brush. Though most of Sir Matthew's canvas is occupied by a female figure, the rose-loving throng before it from ten to five was remarkable not only for size but enthusiasm.

Subsequent correspondence in *The British Rosegrower*, however, showed that public approval was not unminged:

To the Editor of *The British Rosegrower*

SIR,—Your Art Critic seems to have dodged one rather embarrassing issue. In order to display a fine rose to advantage it is surely not necessary to remove all one's clothing, like the lady in the picture? Nurserymen will ask themselves if this procedure is likely to appeal to a British clientele.

FRED B. DIBBLER, F.R.H.S.

SIR,—Surely Mr. Dibbler exaggerates? One doubts if one per cent of rose-lovers noticed the nude lady's presence at all.

It is certainly a Continental custom to remove one's clothing on pretexts which appear trivial or otiose to a British eye. Rodin's statue "The Thinker" is a case in point. But let us preserve a sense of proportion!

(Lady) DESIRÉE UMBRAGE

SIR,—No rosegrower worth his (her) salt would behave like the lady in the picture. It is not the British way of life.

MULCIBER GRUMMITT,
Lieut.-Commr. (E), R.N. (ret.)

SIR,—Lady Umbrage is perhaps right. "Venus," by the well-known Italian artist Fra Botticelli, seems reasonably unclothed, having just

emerged from the sea. The roses floating round her, incidentally, are those catalogued by Messrs. Claychop of Billericay as "Rev. Job Sidebottom."

GORDON SMELLCRAFT, F.R.H.S.

SIR,—Commr. Grummitt is woefully mistaken about the British way of life. I enclose an illustrated brochure showing the striking progress of this pioneer liberal movement since 1929.

ODO J. STRIPWELL, Lieut.-Col. (ret.)
ex-F.R.H.S. (Presdt., Nudist Rosegrowers' Association of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.)

SIR,—Oh, dear, these "nudes"! Is it really necessary to waft the atmosphere of the Parisian music-hall into the gracious world of British horticulture? Just a "green thought"!

(Miss) MYRTLE BANDICOOT

SIR,—Col. Stripwell's arrogant claim to priority in liberal revolt is typical of a Mohock who spurns fraternal co-operation with men who blazed the trail before him. I enclose our 31st annual report, which speaks for itself, as every bigamous rosegrower is aware.

C. HANNIBAL LOVEJOY, Ph.D.,
ex-F.R.H.S. (Founder-Presdt., Rosegrowing Bigamists' League of Empire.)

Here the matter rests for the moment. When the National Rose Society may be expected to alter its present frigid attitude towards both movements of the *avant-garde*, and how official recognition will affect—especially on Mothers' Day—the retail florist, is not yet known.



The Music Comes 'Round

By J. B. BOOTHROYD

(All the new tunes are the old tunes now)

"MA! he's making—eyes at me, MA! he's awful—nice to me . . ." What would you say now, you balding old fathers of families: nineteen twenty-three? Four? Well, thereabouts. Anyway, it's safe to say thirty years ago. And this very morning I heard "Pagan Love Song"; it was changed from a waltz (valse?) to a foxtrot, certainly, but it wasn't to be mistaken by a man who wore his first tail suit to it, in—at a guess—nineteen thirty-one. I could check the date if I cared to go upstairs and look at the tailor's label.

They're all back. "Lullaby of Bird-land," "Happy Days and Lonely Nights," "Good News," "Together," "Varsity Drag," "Charmaine," "Who's Sorry Now" . . . Yesterday I switched on for the tail-end of what I'm pretty sure was "The Girl in the Little Green Hat." And as for "They Didn't Believe Me," that must now be coming up for its fourth round. Its last appearance but one was in the early 'thirties, if memory serves, and I was playing it on the piano in a pub in Scunthorpe. If that sounds far-fetched I can only say that it takes a livelier imagination than mine to invent facts like that. And I turned to another customer (I hope you didn't think I was playing in this pub for money? Just for beer) and remarked on the excellence of this new tune I'd just mastered. He was a balding old creature in a blue suit, going on forty-seven, and I suppose it's the shock of his reply that has printed him so clearly on my memory. "That tune?" he said—"Why, they were playing that when I was courting, twenty-five years ago."

It maddened me, I remember. Who cared? What was the point? But whatever the compulsion to say it, and to make me feel, shock-headed lad that I was, balding and going on forty-seven, it was something pretty basic; because it's what I'm saying all the time these days to the young things at parties, jiggling and snapping their fingers to some latest smash-hit that I was rendering at church socials in nineteen twenty-six. Can I sit slumped in a corner and *not* tell them that I danced to it one romantic night in the Drill Hall, Horncastle? I cannot. Even

though I remember the Scunthorpe affair so vividly I still have to say "That? They were playing it when I was your age." But at least now I know how the Scunthorpe man felt. Crushed. You can see from those young things' faces that they don't believe (a) that you ever heard it before and (b) that you ever were their age. It's disheartening.

Luckily, however, being myself a pianist of sorts, and having in fact once sustained an engagement with the band at the Rendezvous, Cambridge, Jul-Aug. 1929 ("Lover Come Back," "Parted," "I'll Always Be in Love With You,"

"Ain't Misbehavin'," "Louise," "Song is Ended," "Glad-Rag Doll," "You Were Meant," "Funny That Way," "Can't Help Lovin'," "Broadway Melody" and many more, send s.a.e. for complete list)—luckily, as I say, the revivalist trend works to my advantage as well. When young things at parties invite me to play the piano, narrowly forestalling my offer, it is pleasing to hear a pair of them in conversation near at hand: "Ask him for 'Clouds Will Soon Roll By.'" "Oh, don't be daft, you can see he doesn't know anything later than 'Old Kentucky Home' . . ." And,



"Sorry, sir, no deciphering aloud."

passing a hand negligently over my bald patch, I glide effortlessly into "Clouds Will Soon," which of course is not only pushing this week's top ten but was the rage of the watering-places in 'thirty-two, the summer when I was both working in Skegness and learning the saxophone.

Before the old tunes started coming back it was my saxophone playing that kept me in touch with modern youth. Curiously, the instrument, though not quite the symbol of glamour it was in the days of Wodehouse's heroes—how old do you suppose Freddie Threepwood is now?—is still accepted as a sign that a man who plays it must be at least a couple of years distant from his death-bed. Though of course it comes nowhere at all compared with the guitar (tuned as a ukulele) and the washboard, or those containers full of shot that they shake all the time at Edmundo Ros's place. Nevertheless, it carries weight, and I wish I still had one. I used to have three, and could play simple tunes on them all; the same simple tunes; also the first sixteen bars of a novelty composition by Rudy or one of the other Staritas. (That's a name that foxes you young 'uns, I fancy? Poor things, you, never to have heard of Fred Elizalde, or Alfredo before he became Campoli!) But then a day came when the saxophone lost its

power as a seal set on my modern youthfulness: because I read somewhere that a famous saxophonist had retired. I fancy it was none other than Joe Crossman (sorry, Joe, if you're still blowing). This seemed to me to mark the end of an epoch, like Stuart Hibberd leaving the B.B.C. Up to then announcers and saxophone-players hadn't been in existence long enough for any of them to have retired. It shook me. I sent my tenor and alto saxophones to the Commissioners of Inland Revenue, a second-hand dealer in Charing Cross Road kindly obliging as middleman . . .

Fathers of Science—1

Far too little, it seems to me, is the recognition of Atomic Science in song. When the embarrassed child climbs on to the platform at the end of term to give a simple recitation, who are the heroes that the piping treble proceeds to glorify? Statesmen and soldiers for the most part, outlaws even, sailors and kings. Alone stood brave Horatius, yet constant still in mind—of what? Of seventy billion particles in one small mote combined? Far from it. Yet the scientists, not the polemarchs, rule us to-day, and even more certainly will rule us to-morrow. I cannot hope to remedy these gaps in our golden treasures. I can only indicate the spirit of enthusiasm in which more competent writers may attempt the task. Silence, please.

WHAT are these forms in phantom lorries

White-robed and issuing fast
Out of the faint laboratories
Of the remembered past?

Eyes stare in vain. So swift the speed is
Of all that thundering pile
Was that the face of Archimedes?
Did Galileo smile?

Most likely. All pell-mell the sages
Roll through my clouded dream,
The Back-room boys of other ages
Before and after steam.

Note how absorbed, above their vessels,
They come to dree their weirds,
What crucibles, retorts and pestles!
What whiskers and what beards!

Dark secrets do they hold between 'em,
Full many a story told
Of isolated molybdenum
Or manufactured gold?

And the last time I looked for my soprano, which I had periodically given an airing when I thought the house was empty, my wife told me that she had given it away to one of the house-painters. I forget the reason she gave. It was either that he needed one or that we didn't. And lately I've been missing it. If the Light Programme is anything to go by, "I Love the Moon" is coming back, and I used to be able to play this on the soprano with one hand, leaving the other free to vamp on the piano. What a riot *that* would have been with the young things!

Engels? Or is the eye mistaken
Lavoisier? Kepler? Planck?
Huygens and Dalton? Kelvin? Bacon?
(Roger I mean, not Frank.)

Rutherford there has passed a bottle
Of—who shall dare to say?—
To Bessemer, to Aristotle
And on to Faraday.

There's Watt—in half a million
guesses—
Ampères embattled dome
And Volta of the silvery tresses
And the sly shape of Ohm.

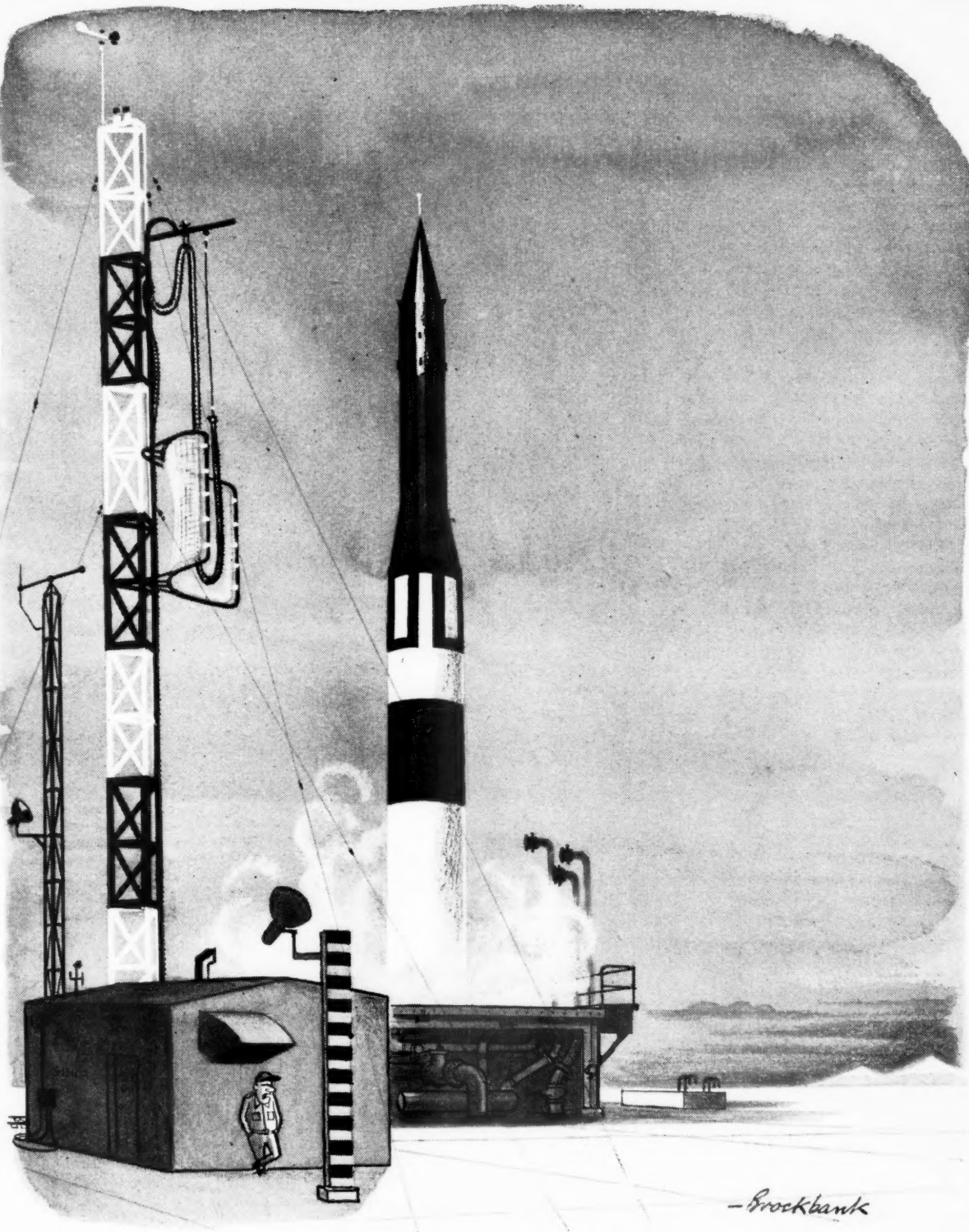
What is that song young Hooke was
humming?
I think I heard a roar—
Childe Röntgen to the Dark Tower
coming
And bursting through the door.

Heroic sails, with faith unbounded,
And strength of arms and wits;
Let them proceed till they have
pounded
The nucleus to bits.

Earth, Air, and Sea, the starry
Rockets
And Time and Space perhaps
Are buttoned up inside the pockets
Of these peculiar chaps.

Before the radiant dream disperses,
As no one that I know
Has sung their praise in doggerel
verses,
Well, I shall have a go. EVOE





" . . . four, three, two, one, zero—Timber !"

Concluding

THE NEW MAYHEW—



—A ROCKING BOY



HIS poor boy was not yet eighteen years old. He was born, he told me, in the house in a London suburb where I questioned him, the youngest of four children. His father was a dock-worker. He had always been happy at home, even his shoes being cleaned for him. His parents encouraged him in his present work.

When he attained a salary of five hundred pounds a week they planned to retire to the country.

"No, I don't reckon it's like kids being sent up chimneys in the olden days. I enjoy the work, that's the difference. I guess I wouldn't fancy crawling up no chimney." [He made use of American turns of speech, and his accent was a surprising patchwork of Kentucky, Brooklyn, Shoreditch and Oklahoma; when he "sang," as it might be termed, he made sounds which resolved themselves into an imperfectly conceived impression of a Georgia negro essaying a Cockney accent.] "No, I'm not making five hundred a week yet, nor anywhere near it. It takes a month or two. I'm just starting, see? Up to now I've been doing it for *kicks* [fleeting moments of delight]. Well, the way you start, you get a guitar on the hire, because that's something to hold. Otherwise you most likely wouldn't have nothing to do with your hands, like. Sure, you can play it if you want, but who's going to take all that trouble? Man, the way I've got it figgered, nobody takes any trouble nowadays. Even if you're a pro you got to *look* like you're an amacher, otherwise the kids are going to think you're doing something they couldn't do. Next you buy all the reccuds, and learn yourself to copy them. Then you learn yourself the movements, like the shakes and all that. Blimey, it's easy enough picked up, and that's for sure."

Here he grasped his guitar, and placing his left thumb firmly across five of the six strings at a random angle, set up an inharmonious thumping noise by monotonously fumbling and scrabbling at the strings with the fingers of his right hand. His eyes having achieved a satisfactory glaze, he commenced a demonstration of his art.

This involved the restless gibbering of a "song," of which the words were so far from being comprehensible that I feared at first for the boy's health, judging him to be on the point of falling into some dreadful fit or convulsion. From this alarming noise one word presently became recognizable through frequent, enraptured repetition. This word was "rahk." I was unable to account for it, or to attach any meaning to it. The musical setting of the chanty was not without charm for the historically minded, being in an antique "blues" idiom except that the stress was placed, with a hypnotic insistence, upon the second beat of every bar; it had a pleasing bucolic simplicity, deriving as it did from the primitive, half-forgotten rustic folk-music of Western America.

The lad's behaviour while neighing, barking, baying and bleating the "words" (it might have been preferable to sing them, but he insisted that he had no ambition in that direction) was appropriately bestial; for it consisted in a rolling of the eyes, a twitching of the facial muscles, a stamping of the feet, and movements of the body so extravagantly indecorous that they would not have been out of place in one of the more lewd and dissolute orgies secretly indulged in by jungle savages. Some of these movements were evidently borrowed from the obscenely sophisticated behaviour of dancing-girls employed in certain American "burlesque" houses; notably those erotic and unseemly motions referred to in such circles as "bumps." To observe a youth of such tender years indulging openly and vigorously in these and other salacious exercises, and with a lunatic kind of ruttish enjoyment in his expression, was not pleasant. I found it interesting, at the same time, to reflect that the most ecstatic audiences for these exhibitions of unrestrained carnality are drawn from among children of an age between twelve and seventeen, principally little girls.

Certainly, popular entertainment in these islands would seem to have taken great strides during the last ten years towards the gutter and the stews.

Upon the conclusion of the demonstration I thanked the boy and asked for some further views on his prospects

of enrichment. To this he replied that "rock 'n' roll" was here to stay; that given three months he could make himself indistinguishable from a Mr. Presley [a millionaire practitioner with the saving quality of originality]; and that all he needed was a manager and a *gimmick* [some striking or fanciful personal idiosyncrasy, deliberately adopted, and calculated to capture the attention of the children who buy gramophone records]. In this latter connection he was undecided as to whether he would affect a green wig, or have it put about that he could mesmerize a woman in ten seconds.

Despite the aggressive optimism implied in the boy's account of his future, I could not escape the feeling, from some blank quality in his normal expression, that he already privately half feared that he might end as a martyr; to what precise cause, it was not clear. I had no doubt that riches would be his; but I could foresee no completely satisfactory conclusion for a public entertainer who frankly based his philosophy upon the maxim "Man, nobody takes any trouble nowadays."

I was assured that five hundred pounds a week may indeed be earned by some of these boys; moreover, my inquiries confirm that one reason for the adoration lavished upon them, no less by ladies of wealth and position than by the children of the underprivileged, is the very fact that their performances are unpolished, *naïve*, or crude: these qualities combining to render their antics "fresh" and "amusing." Meanwhile, professional performers of mature experience, having brought their artistry to some degree of perfection through years of patient labour, must be content to divide such crusts as may be tossed to them from the little boys' banquets. Thus, as time progresses, is the diverting art of music-hall being steadily debased: it will hardly last out this century.

ALEX ATKINSON

THE END

Issues containing earlier instalments of "The New Mayhew" may be obtained from the Circulation Manager, *Punch*, 10 Bouverie Street, London, E.C.4, price 1s. each, post free.

The Colonel and the Divine

By PETER DICKINSON

IT is not often that I find my heart-strings striking a common chord with those of Colonel Nasser, but in his recent dickerings with the Sudan one thing confused the stern condemnation which might otherwise have sprung unbidden to my lips. In the face of his attempt to draw a straight line on the map it was hard to suppress the instincts of admiration rooted deep in me by a whole boyhood of being bad at geography. Geography masters, in my experience, have little in common with each other, because they have nearly all been hired to teach something else, like French or cricket. But this very lack of interest in their subject gives them one universal habit; while they correct *dictées* or wonder whether it's worth their moving to a minor county on the chance of playing for it, their classes trace maps. Outside lie sun and grass, nets and two trees rubbed shiny with climbing, and matron sleeps in a deck-chair on the head-master's private lawn; but in the classroom there is nothing but a smell

of chalk-dust and a world narrowed down to one's own sweaty fingers tracing the shapeless intricacies of the fjords of Norway.

A glance at the history of North American geography shows that I am not alone in my liking for straight edges. Charles Mason and Jeremiah Dixon were clearly not free from the numbing influence of Old World map-making when they patched and haggled away at the line that bears their name; four years it took them, starting in 1763, to divide the North from the South, and a lot of good came of it. But not a century was out before the wagons were heading Westwards towards a larger, freer air, towards a new life, towards the sunset, towards better geography. It is rather surprising that no Westerns have been made about the men who shaped Colorado and Wyoming, with their brave right-angle corners and four lines joining them. There is hardly a state west of the Mississippi that does not possess some piece of frontier for a schoolboy to lay his ruler along and score deep and true into the tracing-paper.

By now the technique is generally accepted, and the statesmen who plank down a parallel to separate two ideologies or chisel off a bit of neighbouring territory can afford to forget the pioneers. And even the pioneers had forgotten, or never heard of, the greatest of the straight-line theorists. Thomas Burnet (1635?-1715) was a divine of some eminence and master of the Charterhouse. During a journey across the Alps he was struck by the sloping stratification of the rock surfaces and the general untidiness of the scenery, this last being a characteristic he had also observed in rivers and coast-lines. From this small beginning he evolved his theory of cosmogony.

The earth, he decided, must have been created a perfect sphere, solid matter in the middle, water surrounding it, and oils, naturally,

floating on the water. But so huge an undertaking as the creation of a world naturally stirred up a lot of dust, which settled on the oil and combined with it to form a crust. Four beautifully symmetrical rivers rose at the North Pole and flowed in sinuous curves down the four quarters of the globe, going to ground again at the South Pole. Such was the primal scene, smooth, balanced and perfect. But man behaved even then as he still does at beauty spots in Wales, and spoilt it all by erecting enormous buildings, of which the tower of Babel is the most notorious example. Such were his iniquities that a great rain was sent to soften the crust, which had already been weakened by excessive architecture. Noah, as is recorded, survived the catastrophe, and his descendants have inherited the dishevelled continents that are really the enormous, shelving remnants of a once perfect world.

Compared with cosmogony of such grandeur, Colonel Nasser's operations, even if they are in the scale of 1:1 and not the usual unsatisfactory 1:2,500,000 in the bottom left-hand corner, do not amount to much, but at least they show that the instinct towards perfection flowers in surprisingly desert airs. It may well be that we are all, subconsciously, striving towards the primitive simplicity that Burnet envisaged. Though it seems more likely at the moment that we are really heading for the end he foretold, a molten blob flaming upon the void and quite dramatically symmetrical.

§ §

"Coming to your local cinema soon is a film I feel sure you would hate to miss. Therefore, I am taking this opportunity of bringing it especially to your notice.

It is *The One That Got Away*, the most remarkable escape story ever filmed—the incredible true story of the man who escaped not once, but three times.

It has been adapted from the best selling book by James Leasor and Kendall Burt.

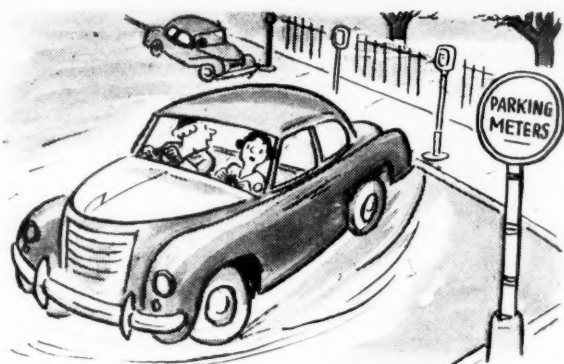
The role of Franz von Werra, the Luftwaffe ace who was the only German to escape from British captivity during the Second World War, is played by a magnificent screen personality, the top ranking Continental star Hardy Kruger.

When they discover that he is working for the notorious Captain Starlight, the brothers agree to help him drive 1,000 head of cattle to Adelaide, where they will be sold."

Ilkeston Pioneer

Oh, not Trojan horses?





"I bet you neither of us has got any—



—change."

After Emmeline

By MONICA FURLONG

HAD you noticed there was a new women's magazine on the book-stalls? It is one of those tiny things which ominate huge events. For women are marching again, clad in their traditional battle-dress of short skirts and cloche-hats.

This time, however, we are moving not forward but backward—back, back, back to the oh-so-cosy chitter of the coterie and the sect.

Sect No. 1. The Women of the Year luncheon. This is held every autumn and the year I went (as a reporter, not one of the Women, need I say) it was at the Savoy. There were several hundred famous women there and one man who was the photographer from an evening paper. Apart from the photographer the only person there one really wished to meet was a girl with a bosom famous throughout the civilized world, though her bosom was much like anybody else's, only bigger. A novelist got up and congratulated the lunchers on their immense cleverness in being women, and told a dry little anecdote at the expense of men. ("I remember at my first dance a young man saying to me 'I hope you're not one of these intellectual women one hears about.'")

Sect No. 2. Women's plays and women's books—not necessarily written by women, but for them, with unerring aim at the pure marshmallow which lurks equally beneath apron and B.Sc. gown. To give real satisfaction the hero must conform to one of the approved male types, i.e. blind, maimed (preferably in battle), amnesiac, or quite

simply miserable with a dash of neurosis. Genius is occasionally tolerated, provided it requires a woman's inspiration for its flowering. All these delightful kinds of men give rise, not surprisingly, to exotic passion.

Sect No. 3 is "Woman's Hour" together with its sister programmes on television. In case you thought that all radio programmes were equally suitable (or unsuitable) for men and women, depending merely on taste, intelligence and education, the existence of these programmes should show you how wrong you are. Women *need* time set aside for them so that they can be told how to clean the bath ("You can clean the bath in two positions, either kneeling or standing") and how to buy stair-rods. Also how to triumph over arthritis, how to cope with a hæmophilic son, and how to be a housewife in Ibiza—all handy bits of information in the conduct of everyday life. Occasionally the producer calls in a man with a lisp to talk painlessly about economics or current affairs, so that one can nip out to feed the baby or make a cup of tea.

Sect No. 4. Women's magazines, glossy and matt. The glossy ones are mostly advertisements which make us chew our nails with frustration because we cannot afford an electric rotary spit, wall-to-wall carpeting in the bathroom, hormone skin preparations, or tailored nylon sheets. The matt ones are full of jolly editorial gossip ("Darleen, our Art Editor, came in last week wearing *such* a gay summer print"), pull-out pictures of the Queen, and articles on how to

triumph over arthritis, hæmophilia and housewifery in Ibiza. Also refractory toddlers, unwanted hair, and men.

Sect No. 5. The Woman's Page in the daily newspapers. This is where femininity really comes into its own and the world is put firmly in its place. The best female minds in journalism do not waste their energies on politics and economics, world affairs and industrial disputes, movements in the City or movements in the arts. Money lures in a different direction—to fashion articles, to fulsome or loaded pieces on the Royal Family ("Would you give your boy a haircut like Prince Charles?") and to snobby little pieces about cooking. The writers are always uncompromisingly on the woman's side in what they take for granted is a bitter struggle against husband and family. ("What is a wife worth? Try this simple calculation. What would your husband have to pay weekly for a cook? A valet? A cleaner? A nannie?") Provocation is their strong suit and this, after all, is lesson No. 1 in the art of being a fatal woman. And beside *that* career where is the fun of being a judge, a general, an archbishop or a Prime Minister? Let the men think themselves top dogs, if they like, poor sweets. *We* know better.

"A new 3s book of stamps was put on sale on Wednesday containing six 3d stamps, six 1½d and six ½d."

The Largs and Millport Weekly News
Bad luck for some customer.

Sentimental Memory

R. G. G. PRICE describes a First Love Affair

IN fiction the first love affair is stereotyped, either a dewy boy-and-girl business or the initiation of a lad by a patient, understanding woman of mature years: one often feels her neophyte has to stop himself calling her "aunty." It is a subject commonly described in tenuous prose, filled with dead scents and trodden petals and the unbearable poignancy of the irrecoverable. Mock is made of youth, but it is gentle, respectful mock. Ah me, one is expected to sigh, that I were sixteen again and the violins playing! But then these first love affairs were not, like mine, grounded in a strong belief that one owes a duty to one's love to keep her in good repair.

I have previously described a fleeting, cold-blooded proposal of marriage delivered by me in the Wye Valley at the age of eight. There was no love involved there, only a misapprehension of what was expected in the way of polite behaviour. It was many years before anything that a ballet programme would call "tender passion" overcame me. I knew from my reading that falling in love was a common and pleasurable experience. I also knew that unless I

hurried up I was going to fall for somebody who might be my grandchild. I could not hope for one of those mature romances where a young girl falls for a middle-aged man who has greyed with distinction. My family did not grey: their hair came out in patches.

By my early thirties it seemed only too likely that Fate was reserving me for a widow with red-headed children. I knew myself well enough to realize that any widow I married would be poor, possibly still staggering under a burden of debt left her by my predecessor. I should never sit about in well-cut jodhpurs being sneered at as a fortune-hunter. I did not feel that I should find a matrimonial agent much use because I could not quite believe that their other customers would not be rather like me, belated. I toyed with the idea of being a scholarly bachelor, living parasitically on a weak-minded landlady, the terror of my friends' wives as I dropped egg about while I told prosy tales about my adventures in second-hand bookshops. Unfortunately my landlady was anything but weak-minded. As I sat down at ten p.m. to my usual evening meal of cold, compacted shepherd's pie, rock

buns and semi-solid cocoa I realized that I was neither scholarly nor successfully parasitic, unless parasites go for goodness of heart rather than food values when choosing a host.

There was a war on at the time. I had been ill and was now ready for some part-time work, perhaps of a faintly patriotic nature. A couple of mornings a week in the Food Office and, who knows, I might find myself working next to something nubile. That was the way my mind was working when, on the advice of a shop, I dropped in on the Citizens' Advice Bureau to ask where on the Home Front I should be most useful. The Secretary said in a harassed tone that the Bureau was on the point of moving out of one room into threeish and they could do with somebody to do odd jobs. Could I start on Monday? To give me some idea of what kind of odd jobs I should be doing she handed me the volume of *Advice Notes* which, in a rush of compressed paragraphs, dealt with such topics as the application of the Rent Restriction Acts to shared kitchens, how to get money out of the Assistance Board and what the public-spirited could do about collecting rose-hips. I spent the week-end bemusedly dipping into these concentrated pages and turned up on Monday morning with only one piece of information lodged in my mind: acorns should be stored in thin rows.

My reading of romantic fiction had not led me to expect that one of the signs of a growing attachment might be a sharpened eye for the gnawing away of the loved one by disease. As I watched my boss closely I became the prey of something I will call altru-hypochondria. She prided herself on being a tough young woman, bouncing here, there and everywhere with relentless energy. My love-sickening eye saw through the mask. Here, for the first time in my life, was another human being to save. At first I merely warned her to keep covered up when she went out, offered an occasional lozenge or suggested she might knock off work earlier. Puzzled by these attempts to give advice intramurally she would nod politely and ask me how I was getting on with the Postal Message Scheme or whether I had seen some new official circular. One day I realized that a high



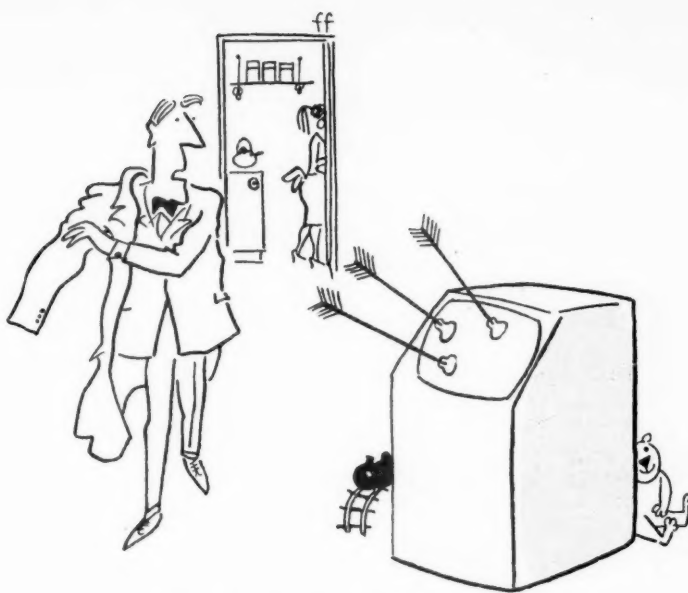
"See—that's what your three Rs have come to."

colour and a cupeptic expression might result from the refusal of her Unconscious to admit the existence of physical weakness. I watched for evidence of breathlessness, hormone deficiency and inner doubt.

It had, somehow, never occurred to me that falling in love need not be obvious to the love-object. I grew worried about the worry I felt my increasing passion might be piling on top of an already almost unbearable physical burden. I knew from my reading that lovers commonly consider themselves unfit to touch the hem of their lady's garment, though their dreams may not stop at hems. I was obviously far from a snip for any girl. What should I do?

The first thing was obviously A Great Renunciation. I must be unselfish and continue as the girl's curator without any hope of ultimate reward. I felt it would be a relief to her to know this. My hat was not in the ring: I was striking myself off the list of candidates. I put this as lucidly as I could in a short letter, typed somewhat better than usual, and rounded off, after enormous effort, with a witticism which I remember as concerning the Archangel Gabriel.

This completely unexpected communication from the help hit the Secretary badly. She could not feel she had given me the slightest encouragement. She had grown up in a lively, extravert world and was unused to men who fended *themselves* off. Not knowing how to deal with the situation, which was ignored in the *Advice Notes*, she decided rather doubtfully to adopt the traditional method and be a sister to me, not realizing that this would make me a brother to her. I seized the new relationship with both hands and gave her my first present, half a dozen temperature charts. I felt I had earned the right to brood over her by renouncing the right of pursuit. I found that her meals were irregular, her visits to the doctor occasional, her grasp of the complex interaction of mind and body uncertain. She found that her independence was being threatened and also that she did not feel quite as well as she had done. Her experience in keeping admirers at a safe distance proved of little use for keeping brother-substitutes at bay. Her confusion was increased by the fact that her own brother had been



"Don't they ever have anything but Westerns?"

the bluff, pull-yourself-together-and-get-back-on-the-toboggan type.

She was not a woman to whom being confused came easily. Rather desperately she offered to make me a chin-strap for the tin-hat I wore when fire-watching and at times when I simply happened to have woken in an apprehensive mood. She made it by some twining, interlacing process while waiting for Dorothy Sayers to complete a lecture on the Christian New Order, at the end of which she was to play "God Save the King." The first evidence to herself that she was on a slippery slide was that she made it so long I had to tie great loops in it. I would not, of course, have dreamed of sacrificing an inch. For a couple of weeks the affair marked time, at least on the surface. She tried to keep me busy by piling office work on me. I wondered whether a request to test her knee-jerks might not be misunderstood.

One day the mounting tension broke

out and, aided I realized later by her, I crossed the Rubicon and grabbed her. I had hardly started kissing her when the telephone rang and she went off to give a blood-transfusion. I sat patiently for an hour and a half typing out notes on a rather difficult case about a wife who claimed her husband was in two regiments simultaneously. When she returned, on receiving the assurance that she did not feel debilitated by loss of blood, I asked her to marry me. Aware by now that the initiative was out of her hands, she rather feebly said she would reserve her answer. This decree nisi made me feel a fiancé, if a secret one. It was in the trough after I had had her tonsils out that she finally said Yes. This means that we have two engagement anniversaries a year and can celebrate both.

My first love affair showed me one thing. Literature is not much of a guide when it comes to Life.

Metre-ology

LIFE's full of poetry!—the very daffodils we buy
May be descended from the ones on Wordsworth's
inward eye.
And come to that, the very wind that blew an Ode from
Shelley

Is like as not the odd warm front they draw us on the telly.

HAZEL TOWNSON

Thinking of Going Away?

"CRUISING while you're snoozing on a Saturday afternoon," came to me as a lyric-title, syrup and saxophone accompaniment, in those very circumstances; it is easy enough to do in an armchair at this time of year when the week-end newspapers are full of foreign holiday advertisements. Every prospect pleases, only the cost is fairly vile. Deciding on a route is not so easy, for the imaginative undertones of the rival tourist agencies, from which only genuine extracts will be quoted, make an already far-ranging choice more bewildering.

At first glance "Malta Has Everything!" seems to settle the question, especially as this claim is amplified in detail, including "every form of sport, glorious cathedrals." There is no mention of Dr. Mintoff, but names do make news in some of these announcements; for example, Dame Rose Macaulay will accompany an Ægean cruise, also Dr. Dimitri Obolensky, Reader in Russian and Balkan Mediaeval History at Oxford. In the matter of history the holiday-maker at the far end of the Mediterranean ("Come and see us for really first-hand information on the lovely and exciting land of Israel") is assured that "the scenery, the flowers, and the sense of history are quite unforgettable" here. There are, farther east, more sovereign remedies against amnesia: "A holiday in India will be remembered when all other holidays have been forgotten." This guarantee makes Oscar Wilde's "Dost thou remember Sicily?" sound rather milk-and-watery and may well owe something to free association with the local elephants, though it might be discouraging to the souvenir trade.

Storing up memories is an insurance against the future; those of us who want to pluck the flowers of to-day will have

to be handy with the Ulysses rope-trick to resist the song the sirens sing south of the Bay of Biscay: "Enjoy the happiest holiday of your life in sunny Portugal." Any doubts on this score can be resolved by "a ninety-six-page colour brochure with three hundred illustrations, maps, photographs, and two other folders." If you prefer your beaches fabulous you need go no farther here than Ofir, Esposende, Viano de Castelo, "world-famous for their fabulous beaches," though a saving bet may be advisable on Rimini, "Italy's fabulous seaside resort on the turquoise Adriatic." (Irrelevantly, my personal list of non-fabulous beaches includes Tel Aviv and Clacton.) Suppose, poised between these rival lures of Portugal and Italy, you land in Spain, there are flats and villas on the Costa Brava and Catalan coast, "ideal for families, the children will love it and you can invite your friends in for a drink." Whether this is *post hoc* or *propter hoc* reasoning is a tolerably moot point; are the romps so fast and loud as only to be assuaged by alcohol or do the sun-tanned little ones get a kick out of seeing your breezy fellow-travellers gradually becoming expansive? Contrast

this with the stern caveat in the midst of a gay exhortation to "See England by inland waterway this year, on brightly painted converted 'narrow boats,' private cabins, excellent meals, licensed bar (No children under fourteen)." The begone-dull-care note is better sustained in Germany, where "Carefree Continental Motoring" has the authentic blithesome and cumbersome ring; it is laid on "in a fully insured Volkswagen for a fortnight's go-as-you-please motoring."

Near or far—"thirty-six hours in a romantic, cruise-like atmosphere from Tilbury to Gothenburg" or "Dance and dine 'neath tropic palms in this sterling British Colony" (Nassau)—distance lends enchantment to the view, even if most of it is swiftly glimpsed in ten, twelve, fourteen days, till we turn to "The Leisurely Tours," who have a message so clear that they don't mind making it a shade bald: "In this world of rushed tours some people do prefer a more leisurely tour. (From 71gns.)."

Well, it's all right for the gadabouts; what do they know of England . . . ? They know a good deal, these shrewd hoteliers of Cornwall: "No charge for your room for any day during which one inch of snow falls or it is foggy in St. Mawes."

LESLIE MARSH

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

(Letters addressed to the Editor, unless specifically marked otherwise, may be considered for publication.)

To the Editor of Punch

SIR,—The obituary pages of the New York papers always give the fatal diagnosis, and very nasty it can make you feel, too, on a hot morning in the subway. Particularly with the undertakers' advertisements in the margins, giving their cut rates for a job which won't disgrace you in front of the neighbours. (This is the only business in America not affected by the do-it-yourself craze.)

The trouble is, you can't make fun of United States' doctors. They're one of the father-images seen so often in America, except among American fathers. But I'm sorry I upset Miss Kilham from Massachusetts [who wrote to criticize Mr. Gordon's article on Doctor in America]. She's a brave woman, letting the local G.P. have a go at her appendix.

RICHARD GORDON

Savile Club, London, W.1

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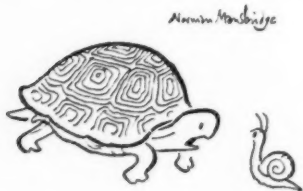
To the Editor of Punch

SIR,—Mr. John Morgan, of the British Embassy, Peking, who submitted a crossword puzzle published by the *Peking People's Daily*, has given one answer to your contributor who wondered how the Chinese "would handle the down and across situation." Crossphrase puzzles have long existed in Chinese.

A spiritual forerunner of "Ximenes," Mrs. Orchid Dow, who lived in China between A.D. 300 and 400, after her husband had been exiled wrote poetry to him and wove it into a word maze, consisting of eight hundred and forty-one characters and an unspecified number of poems, all of which were regular, having a set number of lines, a set number of words to a line, and a set rhyme scheme. It could be read not only downwards but also upwards, from right to left and left to right, round the edge in either direction, diagonally, and in intermittent zigzags.

Yours sincerely,

South Croydon JAMES MACDONALD



"Strictly speaking, I suppose we should both be paying Schedule A."



FOR a few hilarious minutes on Wednesday the House collapsed into Welsh—they even dared the Speaker to say it in Gaelic. James II, Mr. Molson told us on Tuesday, is to leave the National Gallery, though not the public view—and happily so, for, though he may have been a bad king, he is a good statue. On Thursday Mr. Dugdale succeeded in adjourning the House to argue that Señor Perez-Selles, who was not going to have a baby, should not be deported back to Spain. But for the most part it was rents and hard cases about rents. "See what a rent the envious Casca paid." Mr. Mitchison, who opened for the Socialists, grows more like a parson every time that he speaks—a school chaplain perhaps, vainly trying to keep the attention of an inattentive class. "Boys, boys, I must have silence or I shall really have to do something—something quite drastic." It is difficult for anyone—even Mrs. Braddock—to get really roused by a case of which Mr. Mitchison is the proponent. The very cracks themselves—cracks about the Government Front Bench having received notice to quit—smell as if they had been mugged up out of an old hand-book entitled "Cracks for Front Benchers, 2/6 net." By contrast Mr. Brooke, though he may lack flexibility, does not lack courage, and he stood his ground pretty well. After Holborn, Socialist cries of "Resign!" must have seemed to him but small beer.

It was for a change the Conservatives' day to threaten revolt. But the threat did not amount to much. Four Conservatives, it seemed, abstained on one division and one on another. The only one of them to speak out boldly was Mr. Robert Jenkins, and, brave though his effort was, he did not seem much to enjoy making it. No one minds the catcalls of the other side so long as he has the support of those around him, but few Parliamentary experiences

are less pleasant than speaking from the midst of hostile colleagues and being cheered from across the floor by opponents.

The Socialists prefer, if possible, to take these differences off-stage and upstairs, though Mr. Strachey and Mr. Edelman had quite a little floor-staged tiff on Thursday as to whether anyone who said that we should not have the H-bomb was or was not a hypocrite. But the greater battle upstairs was, it seems, inconclusively fought out and at the end of it all Mr. Swingler went off to consult his constituents, and Mr. Driberg went off to consult his colleagues, and nothing at all was settled.

Mr. Allan was making his debut as a Leading Lord in the Navy Estimates and he did it gracefully, but, though everyone except Mr. Fernyhough was agreed that we must have a Navy, nobody was quite clear what it was going to do—except indeed Mr. Bottomley, who had no manner of doubt that it ought to ride in the taxicabs of his constituents. A hit-and-miss Navy, the Select Committee described it, but most people are these days more interested in the problems

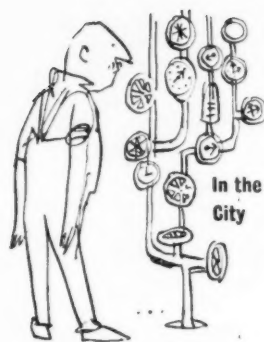
of a hit-and-miss H-bomb than those of a hit-and-miss Navy—if only because the H-bomb is only too likely to hit even when it misses. So a number of eager listeners trudged off from the Service Estimates of the Commons to the more general defence debate of the Lords. There the Bishop of Carlisle, an episcopal Shinwell, pleaded passionately that defence should be taken out of party politics. But it is not quite as easy as that. There is indeed a great deal to be said for taking defence out of party politics, on the ground, as Mr. Shinwell truly stated, that the party divisions are not the real divisions and that therefore any debate, tailored to run along party lines, is bound to be unreal and ridiculous. But the fact that the divisions about the H-bomb do not run along party lines does not alter the fact that there are real divisions, passionately and honestly felt. Lord Coleraine was surely more to the point when he deplored party divisions, but at the same time bluntly said that if there were a world war we should probably be attacked in it, whether we called ourselves armed or unarmed, belligerent or neutral. He went into the division lobby for the Government "with a heavy heart"—but then, as Chief Whips know, a vote, whether the heart that casts it is heavy or has a song in it, counts one, and neither more nor less, in the division lobby—and so the heavy hearts had it and the Government got a good majority—even assisted by Lord Haden Guest, who voted with heart and head against his own party and for the Government.

Mr. Butler is a humane man, and appeals from both sides of the House persuaded him to give Señor Perez-Selles another fortnight's grace. Whether those who were anxious to talk about Army Estimates thought it all quite so humane is another question, for they had to stay there very late indeed.

PERCY SOMERSET



Mr. Henry Brooke



On the Never Never

THE three most powerful agents in the social revolution of our times have been steeply graduated taxation, the spread of the welfare state, and hire purchase—and the greatest of these in the vista of history may well be H.P. No debate arouses more heat and emotion than that about the pros and cons of consumer credit. The critics see in it the symbol of our latter-day decadence; of improvidence, extravagance, the never-ceasing struggle to keep up with the Joneses, to reach for ever higher stations above which to live—and in the process develop the ulcers that are the mark of our twentieth-century civilization.

The supporters (other of course than the prejudiced borrowers who enjoy its fruits) will argue that H.P. in this technological age is the only way in which we can stimulate demand to keep up with supply; that we have solved the problem of making things but have been less successful in creating a demand in keeping with our torrential power to produce. Hire purchase, or consumer credit, they say, is what keeps the modern machine not merely ticking over but going full blast.

Whatever may be said of the principles involved the facts are there for all to see—in the shop windows, in the forests of television masts, and now in the statistics. We are dealing with a visible and measurable phenomenon. The Board of Trade pundits have recently told us that last year goods to the value of about £750 million were sold on hire purchase and other instalment credit terms in Britain. The instalment debt at the end of the year was £484 million—£80 million more than a year previously, though not quite at the all-time peak of £500 million reached at the end of 1955.

There is not much economic dynamite in these figures. The present hire purchase debt in Britain represents about 3½ per cent of the total amount spent by consumers in one year. In the United States the comparable figure is

15 per cent. The United States have now thrived for two generations on a consumer credit system which puts ours in the shade. They have lived with it in good times and bad and have not found it dangerous. The most unexpected and reassuring phenomenon brought out by the experience of instalment credit is the astonishing honesty of the average debtor. The defaults have on the average run well under 1 per cent per annum.

This fact gives some of the charges for hire purchase facilities a decidedly exorbitant tinge. True rates of up to 20 per cent are quite common. No wonder that hire purchase credit in Britain has shown very little response to the credit squeeze. The finance houses have been able to attract more money than ever from the public by bidding for deposits at lusciously attractive rates.



The Blue Rose

FOR the last few years we have been hearing about a blue rose. At the mere mention of the possibility I feel apprehensive, despite the old-fashioned roses in rich shades of purple, fuchsia, magenta, and mauve, numbered among my favourites; take for example a Centifolia known as "Tour de Malakoff" with bunches of bloom "which vary from the intense crimson-magenta of those which have just opened, through rich violet of the full-blown, to the ineffable grey-lavender of old blooms, suggesting the smoke of the battle of Malakoff."

In the last decade there have been new roses, repeating and varying the hues of such nineteenth- and even eighteenth-century roses. There is a lovely floriferous new Hybrid Musk called "Magenta," which is lilac with red flushed buds. Then there is "Tristesse," a Hybrid Tea of a pale mauve-grey, a colour that so completely symbolized its name that it was doomed as a popular favourite although it

Time is beginning to give the hire purchase finance companies a patina of experienced know-how and financial substance. Many of them, including Bowmakers, Lombard Banking, Mercantile Credit, and Wagon Finance Corporation, are prepared to accept deposits of modest amounts and to pay interest of 8 to 8½ per cent. The profitable use to which that money is put and the doggedness with which debtors persist in honouring their commitments through thick and thin make the profitability and prospect of these enterprises enviable—especially if American precedents give any clue to the manner in which the business will develop here. The giant of this particular world in Britain is United Dominions Trust, the yield on whose shares—a modest 4¾ per cent—gives an impressive measure of their investment respectability.

TRUSTEE

delighted the flower-arrangers. Now there is a much more attractive rose "Prelude" with well-shaped buds that open into soft lavender-mauve flowers.

There was a time when pink daffodils and pink irises were fantasies in a dream world. To-day they are a reality, grown in gardens such as yours and mine. But how the battle raged at first! Daffodils, cried the conservatives, are a symbol of spring and must be yellow like the forsythias and the primroses of country lanes. Of course the transition was not as violent as it sounds. The white daffodils had already softened public opinion. Furthermore, the first pink daffodils were a very pale counterpart of the best pinks to-day.

There was the same trouble with irises, and even now, reading descriptions of flowers with fascinating names like "Pink Satin," "Pink Cameo" and "Pink Ruffles," I still feel a distinct shock by the reference to tangerine beards. Delphiniums were for a long time limited in the mind of the gardening public to purples, blues and mauves or combinations of them. Then there appeared a good pink called quite justly "Pink Sensation." Now there are excellent new whites as well.

What of the possibilities of the blue rose? Certainly it cannot be far off. Whether we will like it is debatable. As a daffodil expert remarked when a conservative gardener chose to criticize one of the startling new "pinks": "It's all a matter of taste." On second thoughts he added: "No, of prejudice."

LANNING ROPER

CHAMBER of
CRITICISM

BOOKING OFFICE

Plomer on Plomer

At Home: Memoirs. William Plomer.
Cape, 16/-

MR. WILLIAM PLOMER has practised almost every form of writing. He is well known as a novelist and poet; he has published several volumes of short stories and two biographies; he has written the libretto of an opera and edited a famous diary. At the same time he remains an author essentially outside any given category. The present book is the second instalment of his *Memoirs*, the first part of which, called *Double Lives*, appeared about fifteen years ago.

A second generation South African, Mr. Plomer spent some of his formative years as a young man in Japan. He therefore came to live in this country with a curiously complicated background of views and imaginative experiences. England was at once familiar as an idea, yet utterly strange in many aspects. Much of *At Home* is concerned with investigating what he found round about him as a newcomer in London who saw everyday things in an unusual light.

The book covers so much ground that it is hard to single out any special facet without giving a false impression of its emphasis, but it would be in general true to say that the author (born in 1903) after his arrival in 1929 did not take long to find himself pretty well established on the outskirts of that intellectual world which was then known as "Bloomsbury." People are never tired of grumbling about the lack of facilities in this country for being a highbrow. There may be something in it; but the sorting-out process does often seem to take place with extraordinary speed, even without the help of cafés.

Mr. Plomer tells us that he was not particularly interested in "getting on," and the result of this approach to life is a most entertaining and variegated picture of how he lived. To dispose of criticism at the start, his writing is at times faintly coloured by that self-satisfaction which, among the senior

Bloomsburys, took on an almost overpowering form; while at times he is perhaps a shade arch about tactless ladies who made it too obvious that they found him attractive. He is more at home with accounts of his sometimes extraordinary experiences than with generalizations about the mess the world is—and, if the truth be known, always has been—in. However, one remarks this only to emulate Mr. Plomer's own honesty of expression and naturalness of manner, with the accompanying assurance that the book is most enjoyable.

Soon after arriving in London he narrowly escaped murder at the hands of an all-but-mad landlord, who disposed of his own wife in that way and in due course served a life sentence. Mr. Plomer became a close friend of Anthony Butts (great-grandson of the Butts who was patron of Blake and descendant of that Butts named as a character in Shakespeare and drawn by Holbein) of whose curious character he

here gives an account. Anthony Butts was an eccentric who deserves this memorial.

Later, Mr. Plomer became a publisher's reader, and in the course of those duties—the rewards of which are apt to be somewhat few and far between—he fell upon a real treasure trove. That was Kilvert's Diary, a specimen of which arrived in a couple of old notebooks, sent in by a nephew of the diarist. Kilvert, as is now well known, was the curate of Clyro in Radnorshire in the eighteen-seventies, and, although he died young, was a diarist not much inferior in gift to Pepys or Amiel. Mr. Plomer himself edited this fascinating work and was therefore able to present the world with a classic, perhaps not of the top class, but a classic never the less. It is to be hoped that one day some University Press or institution will print Kilvert in his entirety; for at present we have only a selection.

What else should one say of Mr. Plomer? He gives an enjoyable vignette of Dr. Zebulon Pood, the sexologist, whose lineaments will be recognized by some under this pseudonym. He tells us that Hugh Walpole was once publicly kissed by Conrad in a burst of Polish enthusiasm. His account of a journey across Siberia reminds one of that admirable early novel of Mr. William Gerhardt's, *The Polyglots*. He is a passionate admirer of Poussin, an admiration that I so deeply share that I must mention it. Finally he has a sense of the past that gives shape to the many dissociated matters with which he deals. *At Home* is one of those rare autobiographical works which gives you a vivid idea of the inner life of its writer.

ANTHONY POWELL

NOVEL FACES



VII—SOMERSET MAUGHAM.

*Of Human Bondage once he told the tale;
And trod The Razor's Edge to Cakes and Ale.*

O Hamlet, What a Falling-off

The Town. William Faulkner. *Chatto and Windus, 16/-*

This sequel to *The Hamlet* shows the rapacious Snopes family moving in on Jefferson and adds many convolutions to the history of Yoknapatawpha County. The central situation is tragic and

illuminating; the comic and social detail is delightful. Unfortunately the methods of narration which once gave tension and strangeness have become tricks. Time, persons, syntax are confused. Minor incidents are given pseudo-significance. Nothing is gained by many of the switches of narrator, especially when the new speaker has to explain that he was not alive at the time and is passing on something learned from another character. There are chunks of fine writing that remain writing for the sake of writing, and sometimes the whole tale seems to run into soft sand.

I thought for the first half of the novel that I should never manage to finish it; but I am very glad I did. Despite its maddening lapses of taste and its intermittent unreadability the Faulkner power does come through.

R. G. G. P.

Greek Myths. Robert Graves. Cassell, 30/-

Mr. Robert Graves's great work on the Greek Myths was first produced in two Penguin volumes. Handy and cheap as these are, it was a good idea also to publish this edition for the library shelf and reference work. Mr. Graves, naturally, has his own pet theories which from time to time obtrude a little, but that is a very reasonable price to pay for such a tremendous display of readable erudition. Here you can not only look up whatever classical story you want to ascertain the details about but you may learn at the same time its archaeological and anthropological background. There is also a useful map, showing where it all happened.

A. P.

The Icicle and the Sun. William Sansom. Hogarth, 18/-

In these sensitive impressions of Scandinavia Mr. Sansom makes a brave attempt to define the differences which separate four countries with so much in common. He believes in the importance of the sum of detail, that the way sugar is wrapped and door-knobs move can often be remembered longer than an imposing building, and part of his pleasure as a traveller lies in such observation. Certainly an intelligible idea emerges from this book of the divisions of spirit and habit still dividing peoples so close in their love of freedom and in a puritanism which only urban Denmark has completely shaken off.

He covered a lot of country, and offers sensible suggestions to the inquiring tourist. His writing is rich in the evocative phrase. He can sum up with stabbing economy and catch the special feeling of a landscape in a rapid series of admirable images.

E. O. D. K.

The Feast of Luperical. Brian Moore. André Deutsch, 15/-

Judith Hearne was an Irish spinster driven by repression to secret drinking; and the novel Mr. Moore wrote about

her is now being adapted for the stage and published as a Penguin. Presumably its success has encouraged the author to choose an even more uncompromisingly unromantic protagonist for his second book in Diarmuid Devine, a master at a Catholic college in Belfast, whose abortive love-affair with a Dublin Protestant girl of twenty might have made a good subject for a ten-thousand-word story but seems unduly protracted when described at novel length. "Dev," equally dim of sight and personality, middle-aged at 37, incredibly naïve and emotionally ignorant, behaves so foolishly that sympathy towards him is soon alienated; not unnaturally, he loses the girl. His sole triumph consists in being allowed to keep his job despite the resounding scandal provoked by his infatuation among pupils and staff alike. The care expended upon the actual writing makes one hope that Mr. Moore will decide that the theme of frustration is not inexhaustible.

J. M-R.

AT THE OPERA

Falstaff (SADLER'S WELLS)
Guglielmo Tell (DRURY LANE)

IF the talked-of merger with the Carl Rosa goes through, Sadler's Wells will be pole-axed, no less, next month. Although not by any means the best the Wells can do, this Verdi revival was a sharp reminder of what we may lose.

First the orchestra. Several of Alexander Gibson's tempi made me impatient and hampered the singers, but

the blend and detail were right enough. An orchestra that does well by the marvellous tapestry of this score is far too good to turn on to the street.

Then the Falstaff. I remember Howell Glynn's black, creamy *Lacerato spirito* in *Simon Boccanegra* nearly ten years ago. Since then his bass has become suppler, his presence more expansive, especially in comic parts. In brief, Sadler's Wells made him. His Falstaff is personality as well as paunch and, apart from a touch of strain in high phrases, nobler on the ear than any other Falstaff I have known.

Most of the lesser parts were played and sung with a relative ease and freedom which, operatically, are bred only under a permanent roof. To be sure, it is wrong to get up Dame Quickly like a slattern in some neo-realistic production of *The Beggar's Opera*; and the Garter Inn looked uncommonly like gothic collected for a Camden Town tat shop.

For the rest a meritorious night. There were many empty seats. If the public is lethargic, can the Treasury be expected to bestir itself further?

On the critical beat I found myself in a minority of one about *Tell*. For me—and, judging by their jubilation, lots of others in the house—Rossini's founding score (much Meyerbeer, early Verdi and even Wagner were built on it) is an absorbing architectural exhibit, a mile-long façade of comely, lucid melodies and ensembles, with a handsome orchestral ground-floor.

Gino Bechi opened as *Tell* with abashed, lowered eyelids, as if apologizing for being unable to get Rossini's lower notes, but sang himself gradually into beefy form. His shooting of a pre-split wooden apple from Jemmy Tell's crown was a patent swindle. Actually Jemmy headed the thing towards the wings like a soccer player.

With the leading soprano almost voiceless through cold, the female honours were parcelled up and carried off by Alicia Markova. On second thoughts, Markova was the night's draw, not Rossini.

CHARLES REID



"Compliments of the Ginger Group."

AT THE PLAY

Paris Not So Gay
(OXFORD PLAYHOUSE)
School (PRINCES)
The Winslow Boy (FELTHAM)

IT is not for me to say which got nearer to pointing a way out of the human dilemma, Peter Ustinov's satire on war, *Paris Not So Gay*, or the debate on the H-bomb taking place round the corner in Oxford on the first night. There is nothing very novel in Mr. Ustinov's attack on the futility of mass-murder as a means of settlement; we have just been reminded how admirably Aristophanes managed it a long time ago. But since Shaw died no

British dramatist has pulled the legs of soldiers or statesmen more successfully than Mr. Ustinov, and if *Paris Not So Gay* is a display of verbal fireworks of differing quality at least it provides an excellent first act and is for the most part fair entertainment.

His Helen bears out a long-felt suspicion that she was a bore. But the nice point he makes is that she was fully aware of it: an adoring but despised wife who longed to be able to think of something to say. Menelaos, frank about his own infidelities, cannot understand her chaste aversion to a lover. While he practises javelin-throwing (it might easily have been putting), we watch her rebuff the professional routine of seduction of Agamemnon, Achilles and Odysseus, three jolly soldiers who might have dropped in to tea somewhere near Ascot. With Paris, however, it is different, for he looks so exactly like Menelaos that in fact John Stratton plays both parts; yet once arrived in Troy Paris in his turn is crushed by her stupendous dullness, and aches to send her back C.O.D. to the Greeks. And so the war starts with a minimum of reason, Menelaos having done his best to damp the military ardour of his friends.

In a senile Priam, a dogmatic Laocoön and the childish jealousies of the Greek generals Mr. Ustinov finds passable comedy, but the play droops until the final scenes in Priam's palace where both sides, equally on their last legs, cynically seek a solution that will sound like victory on the common ear. Of course it is Thersites, the clear-sighted coward unclouded by patriotism, who hits on the perfect answer in the wooden horse. And then, so desperately aged by their experience that they have even failed to



[Paris Not So Gay]

Helen of Troy—ELIZABETH SELLARS

the burlesque in the writing. The modernity of their speech is carried through into the behaviour of comic characters who would still be natural if they had martinis in their hands. John Stratton comes with honours from his double role, and Elizabeth Sellars establishes Helen as a bore without prejudice to her attraction. Of the rest Richard Butler, Joss Ackland and Ronald Leigh-Hunt get fun out of the generals, Winifred Evans makes a cunning matriarchal Hecuba and Maxwell Shaw a Thersites who can cut rings round the whole bunch.

Not much of Tom Robertson is left in *School*, a musical adaptation by Redmond Phillips and Christopher Whelen. The Victorian girls' academy is there, and the dashing young swells who lose their hearts to an heiress and a downtrodden pupil-teacher, and the villainous usher, and the melodramatic ending; but the flavour is too mild, diluted by too many songs which are not bad but not good enough. Although Douglas Seale has produced, the sum of the performances fails to reflect a considerable amount of talent: in Jean Bayless and Eleanor Drew, Michael Blakemore and James Maxwell, and in a chorus that works hard and is in no way short of charm. Wit is missing, and bite. It is all a little too refined.

The Phoenix Players, the dramatic club of the Borstal at Feltham, have been putting on a gallant production of *The Winslow Boy*. It was not surprising to

find the parts of the father and barrister played with accomplishment by the Institution's doctor and chaplain, Dr. Patrick Ross and the Rev. Philip Berry, who were also joint producers; but it was interesting to discover in a boy new to the stage an unforced naturalness that at times made his Ronnie Winslow strangely touching. I am not saying that Norman Winter will ever have his name in neon lights; the fact remains that by intuition he was able to make Ronnie's misery of real concern to the audience. Special credit goes to Cyril Sewell for his Violet, the little maid who brings the great news at the end, to Robin Honeyball for his Catherine, and to producers who got so much from raw material.

Recommended

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

Dinner With the Family (New—9/10/57), two-sided Anouilh. *A Touch of the Sun* (Saville—12/2/58), comedy with depth. *Touch it Light* (Strand—5/3/58), honest, simple Army stuff.

ERIC KEOWN

AT THE PICTURES

Wild is the Wind
Violent Playground

EXCEPT for an ending so hasty and inadequately prepared that one suspects it of having been stuck on to propitiate some such organization as the Catholic Women's Guild, *Wild is the Wind* (Director: George Cukor) is extremely good. It is well written, full

REP SELECTION

Bristol Old Vic, *Man and Superman*, to March 29th.

Northampton Rep, *Hamlet*, to March 22nd.

Guildford Rep, *The Diary of Anne Frank*, to March 15th.

Wimbledon Rep, *The Happy Man*, to March 15th.

recognize one another, Helen and Menelaos have to suffer the final degradation of appearing, for the sake of public relations, in affectionate reunion on the balcony.

This is not a play to set against, for instance, the consistent satiric drive of *Romanoff and Juliet*, but even in its slacker passages Mr. Ustinov can still make us sit up by the turn of a speech or the sudden flash of a phrase. Its date seems wrapped in mystery, except that it is not new.

A good deal of its effects—and it delighted an undergraduate audience—sprang from the neatness with which, in his production, Frank Hauser matches



Gioia—ANNA MAGNANI

Gino—ANTHONY QUINN

of strong character and interesting and convincing detail, and admirably played and directed.

The two central characters are Gino, an Italian-born widower in Nevada, and Gioia, his new Italian wife. She is the sister of his dead wife Rossana, and the heart of the story is that he expects her disposition to be exactly like Rossana's and tries to make her conform when she shows him that she is a far more passionate and less docile woman. You observe that the situation is a sort of reversal of that in *The Rose Tattoo*, and again Anna Magnani splendidly portrays the wife; but the stories, and particularly the characters, are in fact not at all alike. Gioia is a totally different person, much more subtly observed than Serafina was. And *The Rose Tattoo* was in grain a comedy, whereas this—though not as serious as the strong drama of heavy emotions that I dubiously feared when I read the synopsis beforehand—is certainly not that.

Nevertheless it is extraordinarily entertaining and enjoyable, and among the reasons for this is the convincing reality of all the circumstances. Gino is a sheep rancher; as he patrols his extensive domain (in a jeep) the working problems that are a part of his everyday life are made understandable and interesting to us—but they are not included merely as interesting details. The episode of the wild horses is there to reveal character: Gino is ready to kill them because they spoil his sheep's grazing land, but Gioia likes them because they are wild, and angrily defends them. The lambing episode provides a symbol (the piece is full of symbols): the sheep whose lamb has died is "thrown" to accept another,

one of twins, when the dead lamb's skin covers it. There are innumerable details of this kind, striking in themselves, but perfectly justified by the narrative.

Besides Miss Magnani's impressive performance there is Anthony Quinn's, also first-rate, though the bull-headed, blundering, kind but unimaginative Gino is a simpler and more obvious person to portray; and Anthony Franciosa does well with the awkward part of his adopted son, to whom Gioia turns for love because he will treat her as an individual and not as a copy of Rossana. All told, there is not much wrong with this one but the facile ending—and the meaningless title.

After this, the British *Violent Playground* (Director: Basil Dearden) seems even more shallow and artificial than it otherwise would. Its theme is juvenile delinquency in Liverpool and the work of a police "juvenile liaison" officer who has to deal with it, and the story is just what, given this theme, one might work out for oneself. Let's see, there must be one family for the policeman hero to concentrate on: he can get involved by inquiring about the misdeeds of the youngest children—then a wild older brother can be a teen-age gang leader—the good one, the pretty sister, he can fall in love with—then we'll need a big suspense scene, that can be when the brother gets a gun and is besieged in the kids' school . . .

And so on. I know this is unfair, for a good script on a theme is an almost impossibly difficult chore; but the fact remains that these characters have no depth or interest as persons, they are simply representatives of their kind,

type-figures made to fit into their appropriate positions and speak their clichés. Moreover most of the incidents, and situations give the impression of having been contrived to make a particular point, each one as detached and complete as a demonstration or a revue sketch. This shows how the children do a petty theft. This is a typical scene of the gang in action. This is the boys' club doing its best. One gets no feeling of connection, of development—in a word, of reality.

The youngest children are Irish twins, Brona and Fergal Boland; of course they run away with the show. But they aren't believable members of the demonstration family.

Survey

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

As the others did, the new Cinerama show *Seven Wonders of the World* gives you the illusion of being on the spot (if you feel that's what a film should do, anyway), but the commentary is exasperating, as well as being addressed to Americans exclusively. Most striking new one in London is the Swedish *The Seventh Seal*, of which more next week. *The Picasso Mystery* (29/1/58) continues to please and fascinate brows of every height. The remarkably good documentary *Victory at Sea* (26/2/58) and the perfect all-round entertainment *Around the World in Eighty Days* (17/7/57) are still available. Stop-press recommendation: *The Young and the Guilty*.

Releases include *Blue Murder at St. Trinian's* (1/1/58), an enjoyably comic trifle; *The Brave One* (12/2/58), visually superb but otherwise empty; and *Kiss Them for Me*, funny with brilliantly directed group scenes (see "Survey," 1/1/58).

RICHARD MALLETT

AT THE BALLET

The Rake's Progress—Coppelia
Sylvia—The Firebird
(COVENT GARDEN)

THE return of Robert Helpmann to the ballet last week disposed of any notion which may have been entertained by the young that the place left vacant by this remarkable dancer had been satisfactorily filled. The Royal Ballet is rich in male dancers, and even in early days, before the war, Helpmann was not pre-eminent as a lyrical dancer. As a mime, however, he had, and has still, no equal in the Covent Garden company or any other that I have seen, not excluding the Bolshoi.

In the eight years since he left Sadler's Wells Helpmann has acquired experience as actor and producer, but he has also retained—and it cannot have been easy—the physical fitness and control of a dancer. Most important, he has gained rather than lost in his uncanny command of bodily gesture and facial expression.

Ninette de Valois's Hogarthian ballet

The Rake's Progress was a good choice for his opening performance, for there is enough dancing in its first scene to enable him to appear to advantage as a young elegant entering on the pleasures of his riches. Thereafter, the role which he created when he was little more than half his present age launches him on an astonishing display of virtuosity.

Helpmann realizes his limitations as a dancer and does not try to go beyond them, but when, as in most of this work, it is the mime which holds the attention—no matter what else is happening on the stage—the years have taken no toll. We are held fascinated by the Rake's inevitable deterioration, convinced by its terrible truth. In the scene of his death in a madhouse, whither he has come from prison wasted by disease and consumed by remorse, Helpmann proves himself again an artist of unique stature. The dying agony depicted in his face—tiny nervous twitches, drooling mouth, glazed eyes—and final convulsion of the whole body before collapse, are a masterly climax.

The ballet was very well cast for the revival. In particular, Julia Farron gave a moving performance as the young girl who befriends the Rake through all his misery and degradation. The whole work was carried through with immense liveliness and gained much in the orgy scene from Gerd Larsen's fine sense of character.

From tragedy to rich comedy. In the revival of *Coppelia* Mr. Helpmann does not so much repeat his most successful comic creation as offer an improved version. He has added many new touches of subtlety and toned down the buffoonery which used to make it difficult to accept the old man as a figure of pathos in the end. Nadia Nerina is a perfect Swan-hilda and the whole company gave a sparkling performance which could not be faulted at any point. Osbert Lancaster's scenery and dresses again delight the eye.

The Ashton-Delibes full length version of the classico-romantic ballet *Sylvia* has an unusually exacting ballerina role. A change of principals last week gave Nadia Nerina the chance to show her quality in the part created by Margot Fonteyn and now by her much embellished. The younger dancer lacks nothing in technical accomplishment, but there are moments when she betrays awareness of the effort called for. Moreover she seems little touched by emotion. Similarly, in Stravinsky's *The Firebird*, this lovely dancer was faultless in projecting the drama of the dazzling creature's intervention in the love story of the Prince and the beautiful maiden, but the poetry was absent.

Nerina is fortunate in her partner, Philip Chatfield. In his handsome bearing, and in his grace and polish as a dancer in his own right, he is becoming an increasingly valuable asset of the Royal Ballet.

C. B. MORTLOCK

ON THE AIR

Adults Only

THE fuss about "Your Life in Their Hands," the B.B.C.'s occasionally grisly medical, not to say surgical, programme, raises an important issue of principle to which no one has, so far as I know, yet given an authoritative answer. So far the factions have contented themselves with saying either that the programme is harmful or that it isn't. I would like to go one stage further and ask whether, even if it can be proved that it is harmful to squeamish or hypochondriacal viewers, it should not still be broadcast for the benefit of those who are neither squeamish nor hypochondriacal, but who can get some real value from the information that it purveys.

Almost anything can be harmful to someone; I can remember in my own childhood my terror of circus clowns, who certainly had no other object than to make me laugh. There are, any psychiatrist could tell you, innumerable queer folk who react undesirably to seeing people tied up, or wearing velvet, or wrestling. You can't cut out of broadcasting everything which is bad for some particular minority. The important thing is to decide how large the minority has got to be before you label the programme harmful.

My own view is that minorities of this kind should simply not be taken into consideration at all in planning, but that very strenuous warnings should be given about the character of the particular programme at every opportunity. If it says in the *Radio Times*, and in the preliminary announcements, and at every natural break, that people of certain dispositions will be adversely affected by watching the programme, then persons of that disposition who insist on watching it are fools; and one cannot, and indeed should not, legislate for fools. It is because we try to legislate for fools that we cannot see *Tea and Sympathy* or *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* without joining a phony theatre-club, thus making fools of ourselves.

As it happens, I am pretty squeamish myself, but I survived the heart

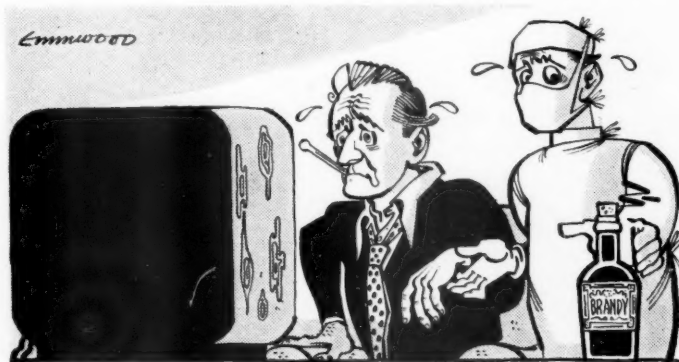
operation a fortnight ago without a qualm, because the sheer scientific interest of the thing occupied me to the exclusion of every other consideration. Incidentally, how admirably the cameras were handled; so admirably that you never thought of camera-work at all, only of what was being, so deftly, put before you.

A programme that could offend no one, and seems to me to exemplify civilized living as I, for one, would like it lived, is "Who Said That?" in which quotations are thrown out to a bundle of civilized people simply as an excuse to provoke them into civilized conversation. The prevalent mood, a mood all too often lacking, is relaxation; and never more so than when John Betjeman is of the panel. There is the perfectly relaxed television artist, never self-conscious, never affected, the very person you would want at your fireside if you were civilized enough to spend an evening talking instead of indulging in some beastly electrical entertainment.

And what a rare quality this relaxation is! It crops up like an outcrop of gold-ore in the most unexpected places. Michael Holliday has it, and Perry Como, and Cliff Michelmore. By contrast, many people whom you would expect to have it lack it entirely. Jack Hawkins, compèreing "Chelsea at Nine," is as taut and theatrical as a juvenile lead in rep. So is Hughie Green; so is Jeremy Hawk. The explanation is not far to seek; they have been trained to make certain effects against a theatrical background in certain ways. Seen against normal people's behaviour the tricks stand out like coal in a snowdrift. The only perfectly relaxed people in television are the people who do not have to think how to appear relaxed.

Not entirely unworthy to be mentioned in the same breath as "Who Said That?" is Associated-Rediffusion's "The Last Word," but they transmit it at six-forty: just the time when its potential viewers are least likely to want to look at it. However, much may be forgiven a programme that lists among its credits "Zetetics by Encyclopædia Britannica, Ltd."

B. A. YOUNG



FOR
WOMEN



Fancy Goods at Brighton

THERE's always something going on at Brighton. Last week it was the Smallwares Trade Fair. At the Metropole Hotel (404 rooms, dogs permitted in public rooms and bedrooms subject to size restriction) trade buyers were permitted, without restriction, in the public rooms and bedrooms. Three complete floors, in fact, were given over to smallwares; every bedroom—even bathrooms—being turned into booths where manufacturers displayed their smalls and buyers placed their orders.

Generally speaking, everything was skilfully arranged and disguised. One saw never a bed nor a bath, and only occasionally was one surprised by a lavatory basin (h. & c.) in the midst of displays of tea-cosies, ribbons, novelty boxes, or knitting wools. Smallwares are not, as might be supposed, small stuff of the ironmongery or pottery trades. They are haberdashery, fancy goods, art-needlework, dressmaking accessories, bathing caps, needle-cases, aprons, belts, zips—all the assorted miscellanea sold on the Ground Floor of big stores and stocked in country-town shops with names like MAUD, MADAME LILIAN, or just simply FANCY GOODS.



It was the top three floors of the Metropole that were given over to the Fair, not those famous first three floors whose unique feature when the hotel was built (by Sir Gilbert Scott of St. Pancras Station and the Albert Memorial) was that the accommodation they offered was all suites. Another exciting feature was the hot sea-water laid on, brought from the sea by a pipe under the road. In those days the Metropole's *Restaurant des Ambassadeurs* was regarded as the only first class restaurant outside London, and Sussex Fortnight brought all Society in from Goodwood. On one occasion five millionaires were seen together in the marble-pillared hall, their aggregate wealth being estimated at something over a hundred million pounds.

Many tides, high and low, have pounded on Brighton beach since then. Smallwares Week, compared with those rich days, may seem a little poor; but, what with buyers and exhibitors coming from far and wide, and with an hotel dance, informal dress, for them every evening (except the evening of the Mayor's reception at the Corn Exchange), business at the bars will have been as brisk as in the palmy times. Business

in the booths was also brisk. Our manufacturers were exhibiting brilliant brainwaves such as the one which takes the toil out of tapestry work. Impatient *petit point* enthusiasts can now buy Velvo-Tapestries which have no tedious backgrounds to embroider: a background is applied to the canvas so that there is only the design to work.

For those who balk at even that much embroidering there is Tri Chem, the colour tube with the ball-point tip which, used with or without a transfer, makes a substitute for embroidery "just as pretty and far easier and quicker to do." Then there is Dewhurst's new Terylene button thread: once sewn, buttons stay on for ever. Or if you consider once sewing is once too often there are the new Calipso buttons which you simply *fix* to the garment—and can take off when it is washed. Another clever fixer is Clippies, an ear-clip mechanic which makes buttons into ear-studs, so that you can have an inexpensive supply of earrings to match the buttons on your clothes.

One would have liked to linger among the "brassière haberdashery" and corset furnishings, or with the bunches of ermine tails (real as well as nylon) and other furry details destined for the trimmings counters. But there were all the plastic wonders to see—a plethora of plastics. New this year is 3D plastic, giving a three-dimensional effect, and the "equally impressive" plastic with a cracked ice effect. In patterned plastics the newest design is a pom-pom print. Translucent-plastic cosmetic pouches, Jek-moth hanging wardrobes, plastic shoe-tidies and sleeve protectors, plastic make-up capes, Brolli hats and Rain Tootsies; plastic reversible hostess aprons and Binki baby pants... such was the foregathering at the Metropole. There's always something going on at Brighton.

ALISON ADBURGHAM

Career Girl: 3 — Politics

IT is only a few years since politics was reckoned a basically male concern, with the ladies a bad second. But there are times nowadays when the Back Benches Hardly seem to have any room at all for the men, they are so full of the wenchies.

No Bikinis in the Broad

LYSISTRATA has left her card at Broadcasting House: she has bid fair to disturb the peace of Sloane Square. And now, bless the little classical, well-meaning soul, she has carried the cold war over the very threshold of Liddell and Scott. She has gone to Oxford. Miss Dawson (should it be Dobson?) of St. Hilda's has "formed a Lysistrata pressure group, whose members should deny themselves to the company of men until the end of term, or until they agree to support the anti-H-Bomb campaign."

With six men to every woman in Oxford, as Miss Dawson informed a reporter, "we wield great power." Indeed they do. One is almost glad, for the men's sake, that the Hilary Term is so nearly over. How will St. Edmund's Hall last a fortnight without St. Hilda's? How will St. John's survive without St. Anne's? What will Christ Church do if no Lady Margaret lends tone about the House? No flying trapeze-styles will gladden the hearts of Trinity; and Trinity will founder. No devotee of Saint-Laurent will emerge from Somerville to lend a glamour to the Randolph Bar. If the campaign continues until next term there will not even be the merest sub-fusc bikini in the Broad. There will be no more Firsts; only blues.

It is (and I speak as an Oxford woman) quite unthinkable. Let the "convert in Cambridge" carry the war elsewhere. I am all with Aristophanes against war. I do not want a second Martyrs' Memorial.

JOANNA RICHARDSON

Ground Bones

HAS your enthusiasm for brewers' yeast, wheat germ and black treacle been waning in the last few years? Have you allowed amino acids, skim milk and raw organ meats to drop gradually out of your diet? Did you forget to remember that Grandma Reynolds cured her jelly belly at eighty-two? Do not despair. A new food has been discovered that enables you to look young and live long.

Bonemeal, for so long regarded as a food fit only for tomato plants, has proved to contain vital substances

lacking in the human diet. Scattered over the morning porridge or taken in tablet form it can not only prolong life but prevent, and even cure, disease.

The tale of how the properties of bonemeal were discovered is gripping in itself. Dr. S. G. Harootian observed that the inhabitants of Deaf Smith County, Texas (including the cats) had highly superior teeth. When strangers moved in *their* dental troubles vanished. This dental superiority was finally traced to the lime, phosphorus and fluorine in the ground and it is these substances that abound in bonemeal.

The testimonials of bonemealers are impressive. An elderly one from Minneapolis writes "My wife and I and also our good old dog are all taking bonemeal." The mother of a boy of twelve at Laguna Beach, California, says "He has never had another cavity and" (this is more impressive still) "never will." Other users claim cures for lame knees, incipient blindness and warts. A model saved her finger nails.

And here is a word of comfort for vegetarians. According to Mr. Rodale, the high priest of bonemeal, "All of the meat products is (*sic*) eliminated from bonemeal, which represents only the residue of mineral matter." This in turn sheds a new light on the character of the giant in *Jack and the Beanstalk*: "I'll grind his bones to make my bread."

The dear old thing was only a harmless vegetarian after all.

SUSAN CHITTY

Beholder's Eye

DROPPING the fashion page
I rise in holy rage.
Balloon, mad sack, mad hem,
I've seen enough of *them*:
Come, beauty absolute,
Come, long-loved summer suit

Whose Coat so feath'ly grips
The Waist and down the Hips,
Whose Collar, small and snug,
Is made the Neck to hug,
Whose pleated Skirt is half-
Way down the modest Calf,

Come, let me gaze apace
Upon the Shape, the grace
That fashion says is gone;
Come, let me put thee on—
And stand here, marvelling:
"I wore this ghastly thing."

ANGELA MILNE

"You can sometimes make a room more intriguing by hanging curtains across a blank wall to suggest an extra window."

News Chronicle

Then jump out.



"We're having the bathroom repainted Sagan pink."

Toby Competitions

No. 7—No, Thanks

YOU have been invited to a social gathering which you would give anything to avoid. Write an excuse for not going which breaks entirely new ground (no previous engagements, illness, etc.) yet carries conviction.

A prize consisting of a framed *Punch* original, to be selected from all available drawings, is offered for the best entry. Runners-up will receive Toby bookmarks. Entries (any number, but each on a separate piece of paper and accompanied by a separate entry token, cut out from the bottom left-hand corner of this page) by first post on Friday, March 21, to TOBY COMPETITION No. 7, *Punch*, 10 Bouverie Street, London, E.C.4.

Report on Competition No. 4

Competitors were asked to write a letter on behalf of vintners, distillers and brewers to musicians and vocalists protesting against the singing of "Drink to me only with thine eyes" as "knocking copy." There was a very general tendency to follow a few fairly obvious lines of thought; the impracticability of optical ingestion, recommendation of more acceptable songs such as "Simon the Cellarer," and a rather hearty defence of conviviality for its own sake. The prize went to:

THE REV. ERIC L. THACKER,
23 FERN STREET,
FARNWORTH,
BOLTON, LANCs.

who wrote:

We have never directly sought the advertising assistance of your esteemed profession, though we have been grateful for those occasional songs which have extolled in a general way the virtues of our

wares. But in contrast to this restraint on our part we are now presented with Mr. B. Jonson's song, "Drink to me only with thine eyes"; a barefaced example of total abstinence propaganda. If there is any doubt as to who Mr. Jonson's sponsors are, the unashamed "pledge" totting in the second line should be proof enough.

But we would make it clear that our motives are altruistic and not merely commercial. In the interests of health we deplore the exhortation to "leave a kiss within the cup." It is true that we made no protest on the appearance of the famous Quilter and Henley hit beginning "Fill a glass with golden wine, and the while your lips are wet, set their perfume unto mine," etc., but as a plea for economy it carries little force, and although it sounds unhygienic we would remind you that the antiseptic properties of alcohol are well known.

In conclusion it is very unfortunate that the song-writer should have chosen to mention by name, even in rejecting it, a foreign product, i.e. "Jove's Nectar."

An original note was struck by Bernard Balkin, 8 Hill Rise, Greenford, Middlesex, who attacked the lyric for its hypocrisy:

One need go no further for argument than to the lyric-writer himself. I am almost tempted to allow Jonson to plead for us in his own words, words which teem with praise of our commodity. Indeed, our copywriters find Ben Jonson a veritable embarrassment of riches. Alas! however, by one of those maddening quirks of the popular taste, these most well-known, most "plugged" verses of Jonson's are the least characteristic of him. To even the most solemn of Jonsonians the sincerity of this poem is suspect, and it would not, we dare aver, offend our author for us to read between the lines of this particular Song to Celia.

There was a pleasantly authentic sound about a solicitor's letter offered by F. H. E. Townshend-Rose, 111 Thornbury Road, Osterley, Middlesex:

We are authorized to say, without prejudice, that our clients would be prepared to meet any reasonable expense incurred by your members in consequence of complying with this request (to stop plugging the song).

Another example of the spirit of compromise from K. B. Koppel, 75 Redington Road, London, N.W.3:

In order to show, however, that my Association is not unmindful of its cultural responsibilities a prize of £100 is offered for a rewrite of the lyric with a view to substituting words which are uncontroversial and incidentally anatomically accurate.

This suggestion was exclusive to Stanley C. Brown, 26 Cumberland Road, Headingley, Leeds:

Would it not be a happy gesture to offer all British rights in this song to the U.S.S.R., whose comrades Mr. Khrushchev has called upon for greater sobriety?



"It doesn't hurt anybody, and it's good for my morale."

A shrewd debating point was scored by W. A. Brewis, 72 Palewell Park, London, S.W.19:

We feel sure you are only too well aware how many of your fraternity would be out of work, or forced to eke out a bare living by going skiffle or part-time telly, were it not for the popular demand for music wherever drink is served or consumed.

Leaving the kiss within the cup was widely condemned. Elizabeth Ostler, 39 Warwick Avenue, Coventry, pointed out:

Our members have spent large sums of money on insuring absolute cleanliness in the manufacture and distribution of our goods, and have made sure that all inns and hotels passing our goods to the public conform to the highest standards. The unhygienic exhortation in this song seeks to undo our good work.

A fine brazen note was struck by W. Howard, 37 Highbank Drive, Liverpool, 19:

We would prefer your vocalists to emphasize clearly the first four titular words and to slur into inarticulate oblivion the last three, and when your instrumentalists play this number it would be better for our trade if only the first four words were used for any announcement.

Toby bookmarks will be sent to all competitors quoted above.



"Ah, just the thing!"

TOBY

7

Under New Management

By T. S. WATT

The Ticklies, supernatural powers of outer space, have forced the general manager of the North Western Banking Company to open new branches of the bank in various parts of the country, with the object of collecting dormant emanations from brilliant minds of the past and fusing them into a super brain with which to dominate the world. The plot is discovered by Pindate, a ledger clerk at the Wordsworth collecting centre. He attempts to foil it, and when an adding machine incorporating the collecting medium is sent to the branch he puts a stop to a course of Wordsworth studies forced upon the staff by Head Office with the object of increasing the sensitivity of the receiver. In so doing he is compelled to sabotage the climbing rope used by the cashier, Chipman, in Operation Cragmaster, a project devised by the manager to assist customers in negotiating the precipices that bar their way to the branch.

V—Short-handed

"HE was checking and initialing hand-holds in the rock face," said Mr. Archer, "when suddenly his rope broke and he fell twenty feet into the Devil's Smoke Room. He was still conscious when I reached him, thank heaven, and I immediately got him to initial my lists up to date."

"How is Mr. Chipman, sir?" asked Pindate huskily.

"Shaken and bruised, but I think no bones are broken. By good fortune, some sheep were sheltering from the wind in the Devil's Smoke Room, and one of them broke Chipman's fall. Unhappily, the wretched brute was transfixed by his umbrella and had to be destroyed, and I have been employing myself, as I made my way back here, in attempting to frame a suitable entry for the General Expenses account. Merely to put 'to sheep' would lead to an endless correspondence with H.O., and yet I confess—ah, telephone!"

"I must really make it quite clear, Pindate," said Ramsay, when the manager had disappeared into his room, "that I refuse to be a party to further violence. I want to save the bank from the Ticklies, naturally, but not by risking the lives of its servants. In any case my own ambitions are modest enough—a small branch near some good fishing, four o'clock finishes and no awkward overdrafts—and I really fail to see why that is any less likely to come from beyond Betelgeuse than from the board room."

"You take a narrow view, Ramsay," said Pindate, "and I am afraid a selfish one. What do the Ticklies want with a bank? There are no trouser pockets

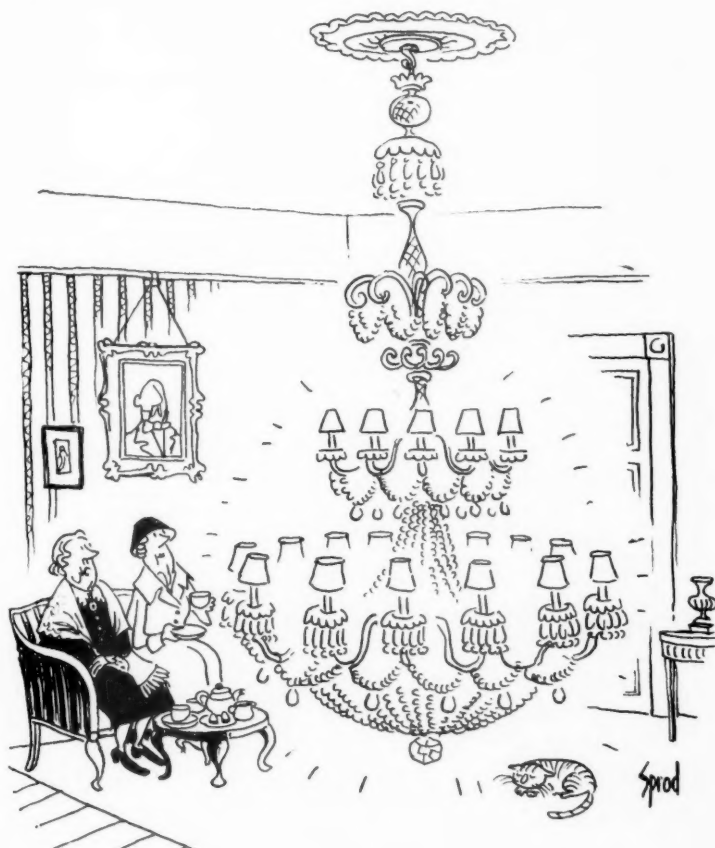
to jingle in outer space, no whisky and cigars to be bought on Rigel. They are out to dominate the world, man, and they may well prove to be hard masters! Do you want to see your children's children herded in flocks for their hair-clippings, or perhaps used as beasts of

burden? However, there should be no further need for extreme measures. Archer will probably carry on with Cragmaster alone, and if by any chance he should have time to spare for Wordsworth studies I have a plan for dealing with the situation by indirect means. He knows absolutely nothing about poetry, and—"

"Pindate! Ramsay!" The manager was standing at the door of his room, pale and distraught. "The G.M.! Very forthright! No time to lose—Wordsworth—" he panted.

"What did he say, sir?" asked Pindate quietly.

Mr. Archer mastered his agitation by a great effort. "Mr. Mintaway expresses himself very forcibly, very forcibly indeed," he said. "Now, Sir Donald Neville would have started with a remark about the weather, asked after



"Actually, we bought it more for warmth."

my health, and worked round gradually to the business in hand, but Mr. Mintaway's first words were 'Has that b—— machine buzzed yet?' I said no, and started to tell him about Cragmaster, but he cut me short with a good-natured imprecation and asked about our Wordsworth studies. I said we were rubbing up our Intimations of Immortality and told him about Chipman's accident. He asked how *he* had been getting on with his Wordsworth. I was surprised at that, but Mr. Mintaway said that there might well be a useful deposit or two among Chipman's fellow patients and he told me a long story about how a couple of lines from *Elegiac Stanzas Suggested by a Picture of Peele Castle in a Storm*, muttered by a delirious junior clerk in a hospital bed, had brought a big shipping account to H.O. Then he gave a peculiar guffaw and rang off."

"A guffaw, sir?" said Pindate, his eyes narrowing.

"Yes, yes, Pindate," said Mr. Archer, "a guffaw. It's of no importance. The main thing is that the G.M. wants us to press forward our Wordsworth studies with the utmost vigour, and to dispatch the lower section of the machine at the earliest possible moment. He has his reasons, and it is not for us to question them. From now on, these two objectives will take top priority."

"Then may I venture to suggest, sir," said Pindate smoothly, "that while Ramsay operates the machine, you and I should run through those parts of the works most familiar to Mr. Mintaway: I am slightly acquainted with him, as

you will remember, and have a fair knowledge of his favourite passages. It is on these that his questions would be based, should he chance to ask any—and I am inclined to think that he will."

"Heaven forbid!" ejaculated Mr. Archer. "However, it is certainly a wise precaution. Let us start immediately."

While Ramsay sat down to the machine, Pindate poked the fire into a cheerful blaze and drew up two chairs. Outside, the snow fell faster.

"How splendid in the morning glows the lily," said Pindate. "'With what grace he throws his supplication to the rose: do roses nod the head, Yasmin?'"

"A little faster, Pindate," said Mr. Archer. "The G.M., I know, wishes us to cover the ground as rapidly as possible."

"The morning light is clear and cold: I dare not in that light behold a whiter light, a deeper gold, a glory too far shed, Yasmin."

"This is from the Intimations?"

"No, sir. It is a letter written by the poet to Mary Hutchinson, who later became his wife. 'But when the deep red eye of day is level with the lone highway, and some to Mecca turn to pray, and I towards thy bed, Yasmin—'"

"One moment, Pindate," interrupted Mr. Archer. "If the G.M. rings up again I might perhaps be able to work in a casual reference to this piece during our conversation, and I should like to know just a little more about it. Is not

Wordsworth—now how shall I put it?—well, announcing his intentions perhaps a little bluntly in the last line? I had always imagined, quite wrongly, I have no doubt, that he was an intensely reserved man, interested mainly in daffodils, butterflies, birds and so on."

"He threw all that overboard, sir," said Pindate, "after he met Miss Hutchinson. 'Or when the wind beneath the moon is drifting like a soul aswoon . . .'"

* * * * *

Mr. Chipman returned after four days, and he, Pindate and Mr. Archer spent the morning in memorizing *Dolores*, dedicated by Wordsworth, said Pindate, to Mrs. Southey. Shortly after twelve, Ramsay, glancing out of the window, saw a small party of people approaching the branch, and his excited exclamation immediately brought the others to his side. The group was led by a man, tall and broad-shouldered, in bowler hat and dark overcoat. He was closely followed by five fashionably dressed women, who chattered and laughed vivaciously as they picked their way up the stony track.

"Customers!" rapped out Mr. Archer. "Let everyone keep his head!"

The leading figure stumbled, narrowly avoiding a heavy fall. A tremendous imprecation rolled up the pass.

"Mr. Archer," said Pindate in a quaking voice, "it's Mintaway."

Next week: **Mintaway**



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